

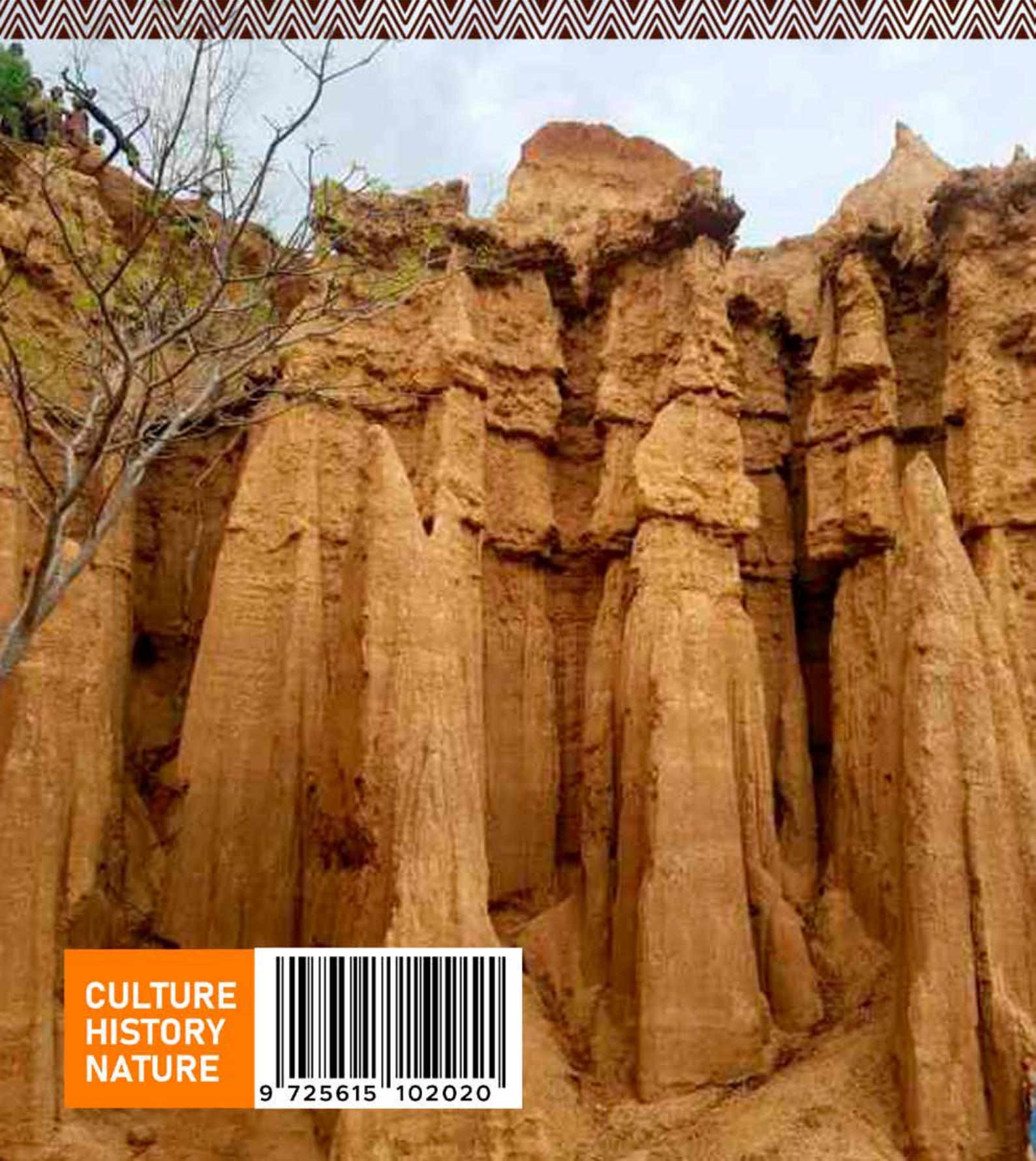
MALAWI

# heritage



15th Oct 2020

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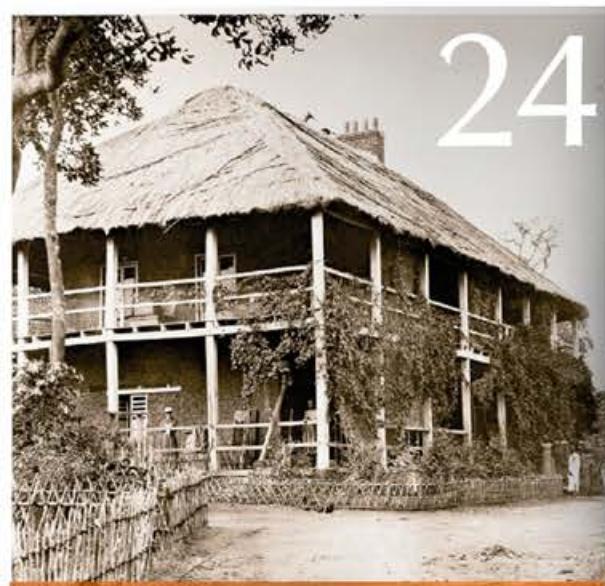
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## ABOUT PUBLISHER

Malawi Heritage Magazine is published by Infinity Media Group, a media firm based in Zomba. The magazine covers cultural, natural and historical issues of Malawi. It aims at promoting the conservation of Malawian cultural and natural heritage.

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# FOREWORD

On behalf of the team at Infinity Media Group, I welcome you to the second edition of Heritage Magazine, the mother's day edition.

Part of the greatest impact in the tourism industry in Malawi has been felt due to covid-19, forcing the industry to develop backup plans to make sure the country is still benefitting from tourism. On the positive side, the same time during the pandemic has been used for reflection in coming up with innovative ideas to improve the tourism industry.

I am impressed with the work plus innovative ideas being done to portray culture as a component of tourism in enhancing the economic development of Malawi. Such efforts as Infinity Media Group's establishment of Heritage Magazine.

Apart from being a center for education, the magazine points out such other places that if taken seriously could bring in a great source of revenue, while at the same time offering the most in leisure.

In trying to sell ourselves internationally, culture is a very good place to start. And it is for such a reason that my ministry, working hand in hand with other private institutions such as Infinity Media Group, will market culture as a product of tourism.

Enjoy reading!

**Dr Micheal Usi**



**Minister of Tourism , Culture and Wildlife**



# EDITOR'S NOTE

**B.Ed (Mw); M.Ed(Mw); Msc(UK); MPA-ID (UK)**

Welcome to the Malawi heritage magazine, join us as we explore many interesting facts about our beautiful country, popularly known as the Warm Heart of Africa.

This issue seeks to enlighten people on the historical, natural and cultural heritage of Malawi.

Find out the place of culture in our burial ceremonies, explore the entrepreneurial genius of our women, hear about Malawian myths and taboos, learn firsthand the invaluable health benefits of castor (msatsi). Admire one of the rare wonders of Malawi as revealed through the Malape pillars. Discover the life of one of the greatest Malawian women making history in the male-dominated field of ICT.

The articles in this magazine express the past, present and future of our heritage. Our team is happy to share them with you. Be on the look out for upcoming issues as we will continue to share fascinating stories of Malawi as a country. Be part of our commitment to promote Malawi's heritage.

Thank you.

**Paul Chiwaya**



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# Arts & Culture



- Our Mothers, Our Pride
- Buried the Cultural Way
- The Place of Customary Law in Malawi
- Fire customs in Ulambya region
- Welcoming a Newborn Child
- Literary Corner
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# Our Mothers, Our Pride

By Innocent Nyondo

Some people take mothers as delicate. Their delicacy though has received diverse interpretations. Some have thought that it means they are fragile, perhaps weak and so can easily break. The handle-with-care kind of thought. Others have chosen to view their delicacy as emanating from the fact that the entire society is built around them. That could be literally because they hold the largest stake in procreation, or less literally through the daily roles they take to keep a society going forward. You know the roles.

Culture has been said to be a major factor in shaping people's behaviors. Like other schools of thought have argued, humans are born with a blank mind. It takes socialization to mold and hammer them into beings that can propel human societies further ahead. Of course not all

behaviors are as a result of the existence of culture. Some can be boiled down to our diverse preferences.

Interestingly, overtime, society has developed a picture of a mother that is mostly general. A kind of picture that is thought to be the model picture for every woman. For instance, in the Malawian society, a woman more especially a mother is expected to at least rise earlier than the rest of the people she lives with. A woman is expected to busy herself almost throughout the day. Jumping from one chore to the next. And so, women go on to boast that, a woman never gets tired.

Meanwhile, men take a more different path. Men are expected to, well, 'provide.' But the society is looser with their role than women's. In most instances, a man has a choice to be what society expects him to be. And there are those men who choose not to be that. Those that grow up soft, perhaps at their mother's side, their mother pushing away any sort of hardship coming their way. These men, society calls them 'women.' Not because they can work as hard or complete the numerous chores women complete, No! They are women simply because they do not fit the picture of a man. It will cost nothing to digress, or maybe your attention. I will digress anyway. Human



development is a complex theory. People that have gone on to make tremendous progress in society have often pointed out that, when they started, they looked at the challenges that came their way as stepping stones, as situations that could teach them facts that could go on to matter to them in various situations. The key in most of such cases is that these achievers do not waste any time asking questions, they simply live with whatever comes. Or as they say, you can never connect dots looking forward, you can only connect dots looking backwards.

In the eyes of many, culture, or Malawian culture, might be setting a burden on mother, giving them more chores than they deserve, hence depriving them of the opportunity to do certain things such as more play, or as some activists argue, more time to put in study and better compete with their male counterparts.

In truth, society puts mothers in a class. An enterprise class. Mothers through their chores become masters of home economics, well, not all of them. But most women become experts in home economics. How much to eat of what and where to obtain other resources. In some cases, women have men by their side to assist them, the majority of the women have to figure all this by themselves. Maybe once or twice

they ask men to throw in an idea here or there.

In these daily activities, women learn innovation. Most of them without knowing that what they are doing is innovation. For instance, they will boil beans, in the absence of cooking oil to make them more delicious, they will go to the garden, look for a type of okra that goes with the beans, cook them together and still have the beans tasting as good or even more. Unless otherwise, that is the efficient utilization of resources that economics preaches.

And so mothers go on to use their minds to create value in several other situations where there might be limitations in accessing certain resources. And science would agree that a continued use of their minds in this way makes it easier for them to think their way through challenges. Or is it art that said practice makes perfect? Who knows? But the next time a woman finds herself without finances but with causes on her mind that require her to find some finances, it becomes easier to employ her mind and find a way out.

There is more. Look around in the society. Who sells the charcoal packed in small plastic bags? Who sells vegetable leaves or tomatoes or spices that you could purchase without noticing that a coin just went out of your pocket? And the list goes on and on. Some men also jump into ventures such as these, but the majority of them are owned by women. Most men would dream of opening hardware stores or big grocery stores and so they would go round and round complaining on how hard it is to get capital. Of course it is hard to get hundreds of thousands or millions in capital. Meanwhile, women will walk to the mountains, pick some pieces of firewood and make profits out of them, and feed their husbands who went out to complain about how business is hard to find.

If there is any explanation to the large number of women who own enterprises, it should be the fact that society places them at a position where every day they force themselves into being enterprising. Though they do so unknowingly, and maybe in some cases against their will. Socially, women are entrepreneurs.

Our mothers are innovative, ambitious and hardworking though they are hindered by the society. It is this that makes all our Malawian mothers the pride of the nation.



# BURIED THE CULTURAL WAY

By Felix K. Masina

In Malawi, funeral ceremonies are predominantly conducted in a Christian or a Muslim way depending on the faith of the deceased. Sometimes it rests on the choice of the deceased when they were alive. A rare occurrence. Traditionally, from the day of demise – among the Christians – people gather at the bereaved house and sing songs of sadness combined with happiness with the belief that their friend has gone to heaven. This happens up until burial where a proper Christian funeral service is conducted. What happens after the burial is left in the hands of the bereaved. During the whole ceremony, different church group members put on their uniforms. One requirement during the funeral is the provision of food for church people - if not everyone- present.

But what if one doesn't belong to any of the aforesaid religions? What if one doesn't know the path to a church or a mosque? What would be of his/her funeral? What if one is more cultural than religious? One who follows traditional beliefs of the ancestors? How would this being be buried? It is inevitable that this person will be buried the cultural way. But what happens at this cultural funeral ceremony?

One common cultural burial in Malawi is the gule wamkulu burial ceremony, commonly done among the Chewa people; a dominant tribe in the central region and a bit by the Mang'anja people. These are found in the districts like Dedza, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Mchinji and Chikwawa. This ceremony could be witnessed across

the warm-heart of Africa where these two tribes are at least in good numbers. The chronology is not so different from the religious way. Actually this can also be called a religion, but let's call it culture.

Similar to the religious way, when a member of the Gule wamkulu clan bites the dust, the clan members are notified. A drum is beaten to convey a message to the villagers about the dark cloud that has befallen them. This marks the outset of the whole ceremony. The cries are heard at the bereaved house and people start to gather as per tradition. A little time later, the environment is shaken and livened by the arrival of the members of gule. They put on masks made from sack cloth, straw and wood disguised as animals. Mostly it is men behind the mask. Women of the clan, at this occasion put on robes with prints of gule and they are the ones who sing songs.

The gule is believed to represent the spiritual world. Their arrival brings commotion coupled with fear, respect and happiness. Some people run away,



some just move a distance away to pave way for the gule. It is a sign of respect. This time, sadness has engulfed. It is known that the gule comes in different types and forms – for of course different purposes. Some gule are strictly for dancing and some for a purpose that is interestingly surprising and unexpectedly unusual; catching any livestock that crosses their path and moves around the bereaved house. And these are taken to the *dambwe* (shrine) to carter for their meal. But this does not spare the family members from providing food to the gule members. Everything is part of the culture. If people learn early about the coming of the gule, they get their animals to safety. Utensils are also taken to safety lest they may be picked or destroyed by the gule. It is a known fact that people flee at the sight of gule. But make no mistaken judgment, it is cultural.

In continuation, once the gule arrive at the bereaved house, they start to sing and dance outside and at times inside around the coffin. Sometimes – as part of the culture in some areas like Dedza- the bereaved are chased out of the house by scaring them but this is not meant for them to really run away. No. It is done to spice up the ceremony. As they sing, dance and beat the drums, the bereaved family and anyone who wishes gives money to the gule. This is done the whole time they are performing – yes it is costly. On the outside, people are constantly scared away by the gule so the running up and down to some people does not cease. To the natives of the village, this is never strange and they cherish it.

At this point, the mood for the funeral is set; people, the gule's arrival, chiefs and other relevant people are in place. The ceremony proceeds as done by other religions. Condolence speeches from the bereaved, the chiefs, the gule clan and any other people worth doing so. In some places like Dedza there's a preaching done by one of the gule clan members. And interestingly, verses from the Old Testament of the Christian Bible that fit the ceremony are used. From there the *kuona nkhone* (face viewing) ceremony is done and everyone is allowed including the gule. After that the journey to the graveyard commences. Traditionally the coffin is supposed to be carried by gule but this

is not the case in some - if not- many areas. The procession is led by the gule and the drum beaters. The gule never ceases to make noise. As opposed to the slow procession by the religions, the gule procession is so agile to the extent that some people especially the old fail to catch up.

Upon arrival at the graveyard, dances are performed and in some areas there's also another preaching. After that, the coffin is lowered as the performance continues until the whole burial is done. When it comes to wreath laying, in some areas it is not practiced but in others like Chikwawa, the gule clan members just pluck twigs or little branches of trees and lay them on the tomb. That marks the end of the burial ceremony and everyone heads back home.

The gule might spend another night at the bereaved house or not depending on conditions best known to the family and the gule clan. But after a day or two, it's cultural to have another ceremony called *Kusasula* which is more like winding up the whole funeral ceremony. This time it is nothing but more dances and dances. The only new thing is that this time around, gule from different *dambwes* come. And of course the family spends more money on them. The spirits don't come out for free.

After at least a month, it is a tradition to have the house of the deceased demolished. This symbolizes that the late has no belonging in the physical world as he has joined the spirits. It's also another way of setting the family people free to do whatever and go wherever they want. When the time for tombstone unveiling comes, people who were most devoted to the gule while alive have their tombstone bear the face of the gule they loved the most. This is what a befitting gule *wamkulu* funeral ceremony partly contains. As it is known there are many secrets attached to this gule *wamkulu* culture.

As sad as a funeral ceremony is known but gule *wamkulu* crafts it with fun and happiness. It is attractive. And to be honest, it is a beautiful ceremony to witness. Fear, respect, sadness and happiness define it. And of course it is costly. But a funeral is costly at all costs.



# THE PLACE OF CUSTOMARY LAW IN MALAWI

By Chestone Kapotie

Customary law is law in Malawi. However that statement sounds, and whatsoever reaction it provokes, it remains the truth. Consequently, there appears a need to dig deep and recognize customary law as a body of laws having significant influence on the livelihood of most Malawians.

Before I delve deep into the subject, it is trite that I give a short background to the present Malawi's legal system. Malawi became a British Protectorate in 1891, under the British Central Africa Order in Council of 1891. The year marked the commencement of a period which eventually matured in 1902. During this period, the colonialist ventured into power consolidation process commonly known as "The establishing of law and order". This process had an in-situ implication on the aftermath effectiveness of the indigenous body of laws known as customary law that had existed long way before the colonialist. I shall turn to this point later in our discussion.

A major shift in legal system for Malawi came in 1902. Malawi (formerly Nyasaland) received its own body of laws from its imperialist masters under the 1902 Nyasaland Order in Council. The new body of law comprised of,

but not limited to, what is today akin to the Constitution. Formal court system and government systems resembling the English way of life were imposed on the indigenous. These laws together with their premeditated changes had long lasting implications on the native customary law.

It is important to note that before the colonial masters came to our land, the law of natives, also referred to as customary law, was instrumental in governing life and conduct within communities analogous to feudal system. Customary law formed a body of laws well observed and enforced by traditional mechanisms despite it being uncodified. The system adequately monitored its citizen and was excellent in commanding morality without invoking imperialist forms of justice.

The 1902 Nyasaland Order in Council, as it might have lingered in your mind, radically changed Malawi's legal terrain. Customary law was not only trampled upon, but treated with disdain and abhorrence by colonialists. Native law became a stranger in its own land. The 1902 Constitution under the British Order in council provided for a repugnancy clause in which, customary law was to be practiced only if it was not repugnant or disgusting in the face of English law.

It is of great importance to remember that, despite the very turbulent storm that befell our native law derived from our way of life, our precious law survived, hence meriting our study of our indigenous law today. The current legal system recognizes customary law in Malawi. Indeed such recognition should not be lightly equated to a fanfare gesture. Customary law was trampled upon and subdued by our colonial masters yet it survived imperious times. This position therefore leads us to our initial question of the day,



### "so what is the place of customary law in Malawi"

A famous legal Philosopher once wrote, "Law is not exhausted by catalogue of new rules or principles each with its own dominion over some discrete theatre of behavior. Nor by any roster of officials and their powers each over part of our lives.....It is finally a fraternal attitude, an expression of how we are united in community through divided project, interest and conviction. Dworkin R Laws Empire (emphasis supplied). There was no way our customary law was to be annihilated hastily, for it is our way of life, yes our fraternal.

Fast forward to the present day, we have before us the 1994 Malawi Constitution. Borrowing imperialist's approaches to legal system, the Constitution in section 5 and section 10(1) proclaims itself as the supreme arbiter and that any law contravening the Constitution remains void and invalid. Despite such pronunciations by the Constitution, section 10(2) provides that in the application and formulation of any Act of Parliament and in the application and development of the common law and customary law, the relevant organs of the State shall have due regard to the principles and provisions of this Constitution.

From the above section, there emerges a route that lays a firm foundation to the recognition of the native law. In so far as it is consistent with Constitutional values, customary law remains a viable source of law worth application and even further development. Though tossed up and down through colonial era, yet customary law finds its firm feet within the current legal dispensation.

Customary law occupies a very important position in our societies. The law has much influence than most conventional laws. Indeed as seen from our discussion, customary law derives its full force from the very supreme law of our land, the Constitution. Customary law only renders preeminence to the Constitution and major piece of legislation.

As noted in famous Malawian customary case of Kamphoni v Kamponi (2015), "While in the past indigenous law was seen through the common law (case law) lens, it must now be seen as an integral part of our law. Like all law it depends for its ultimate force and validity on the Constitution. Its validity must now be determined by reference not to common law, but the Constitution"

It was further stated that, "Our evolving customary law under the 1994 Constitution rises to the same level of law as legislation, common law,

foreign law and international law. Although inferior to legislation, customary law stands in the same position as the common law, where the former applies."

Since customary law is uncodified, Section 64 of Courts Act demands that where customary law is being claimed in court, it must be proven by evidence. This requirement does not at all lessen the importance or relevance of customary law. This requirement embraces the fact that customary law varies from one community to the other within our society.

I am tempted to share with you about the true nature of customary law. Legal philosophers have always argued the idea as to whether there exists a single definition of the law. However, such task is not the locus of our discussion in this article. Suffice to know that I have shared with you the right place of customary law in our land. We all can therefore admiringly look forward to developing and perfecting our customary law, for it is a right, proper, acceptable and sanctified body of law for our land.



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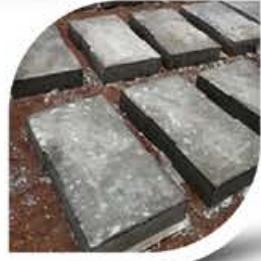


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# Fire customs in Ulambya region

## The transfer of power and authority

By Davie Moses Simengwa



*Imagine a society without those in power and authority; where everybody does what he or she wants, it would definitely end in anarchy or let's say it would end in tears.*

Power and authority are a core part of our societies, every ethnic group has its own way of depicting power and its transference, Lambya inclusive. Imagine a society without those in power and authority; where everybody does what he or she wants, it would definitely end in anarchy or let's say it would end in tears in the voice of youngsters. Transfer of power involves a lot of symbols and rites even for presidents. As the oral tradition says, the tradition contest of fire-making between the Sikwese and the Mwabulambya would appear to refer to the symbolic transfer of power from the former to the latter.

The Lambya people are found in the northern part of Chitipa district to the north of Malawi. In Chitipa, they are referred to as Abalambya and the distinction comes with the language they speak which is called Ichilambya. The Bulambya leadership runs in the family of Nyondo, which is comprised of two families, the Wimbe and the Samphara. Wimbe and Samphara were the first sons of the first Chief Mwaulambya.

Therefore, fire symbolically means translation of power amongst the Lambya speaking group. Hence the Mwabulambya are seen as the inventors of fire and the strong men who defeated the original owners of the land, who in this case are the Sikweses. The Mwabulambyas, however, could not have established themselves in the new area without the support of their rivals, who were also the main link with the spirits of the earth. The tradition also serves a function in the present Lambya social and political life. It explains and justifies the respective roles of the Sikweses and Mwabulambyas.

The Sikweses are one of the relevant clan when it comes to the chieftaincy of Mwabulambya (Kalinga 1985). The early history of Lambyas surrounds the traditions

of the rulers. According to popular oral history in the district, a family led by the first Mwabulambya left their homeland, Ukinga, and settled in Rungwe. After sometime they left Rungwe and travelled further west to Kasasa-also known as Mwapelo-at which point they crossed the Songwe River into the present-day Malawi. Not far from the banks of the river, on the southern slopes of the Misuku Hills, they found a settlement of the Sikwese clan. The Sikweses, who also trace their origins to Ukinga, had lived in the area for some time and claim to have ruled it. Not long after the Mwabulambya arrived a quarrel broke out between him and his followers and their hosts over who should rule the less hilly lands, the area which later came to be called Ulambya. According to oral traditions, the dispute was resolved by a competition in fire-making by the friction method known as ulupekeso. The contest was won by the Mwabulambya's who thereupon assumed political authority over the area.

The head of the Sikwese family and his descendants became the chief advisers to Mwabulambya and played the important role of crowning new chiefs (awa-mwene) (L.H.T. 2, 6, 4 and 10). According to retired Reverend Sikwese, the Sikwese clan presently continues to act as counselors of the chief Mwabulambya; today the Lambya clan cannot crown their chief without the presence of the Sikweses.

However, the oral tradition of the Sikwese clan that I was exposed to, claims that they were rulers of south of Songwe area which is close to Misuku hills. Their oral tradition suggests that no other clan or people lived in the area they claim to have been rulers before Mwabulambya's period. This is not either mentioned in Kalinga (1978) doctoral thesis. However, according to Kalinga (1978) the Lambya ventured into the land roughly around the 17th to 18th century.

However, when we trace the genealogies of some few families does not go beyond six generations. This is unbelievable to say that Mwabulambya's settled first in Misuku hills according to some traditions, where they found two families, the Sikweses and Chilimas. This explanation however doesn't tell whether other clans were also living in the areas where the Sikweses and Chilimas settled or these other clans' culture, customs and other traditions were assimilated in these two dominant clans (L.H.T.).

This question cannot be answered by historians, but it can further be tackled by archaeologists who could trace some artefacts related to this oral history which could assist historians to further explain what happened. So far no archaeological research has been done in Ulambya region and Songwe area with special focus on such history.

The story of the creation of fire is significant. Fire ceremonies featured prominently in certain rituals of the Lambya royal family. In the past, whenever chief Mwabulambya dies, all fires in the land were quenched and new ones were lit only after another person had ascended to the throne. The new fires were lit from the central fireplace at the court of the Mwabulambya. The tradition that mentions the invention of fire and the fire-making competition probably refers to the introduction of this new royal ceremony into Ulambya. During this time, no one in the land was required to start their own fire without someone getting it directly from the chief's court. If you were found starting your own fire, you were either taken to the elders or some misfortunes were supposed to happen in your life. Therefore, people in the land were abided by these dos and don'ts. At this time, people were advised not to eat pumpkin leaves (chiyungwa). If someone disobeyed that, they were taken to the elders for counseling or they were faced with some misfortunes like being killed by lighting. Due to dynamic of culture, these things are no longer happening in the land as many Chiefs and clan heads are influenced by modern Christianity. The practice of denying the communities not to take pumpkin leaves is known as ukusumbira. This is the time whereby the elders in the village come together and organize an offering to their departed ancestral spirits. When the elders have returned from shrine, then the chiefs and his subordinates make declaration for people to start eating pumpkin leaves. Currently, the main common shrines that are connected with the Lambyas are two: at Kafola hill and Chinunkha at kusaka.

# Welcoming a newborn child: Beliefs and myths

By Lucia Nkhoma

Tradition constitutes of customs or beliefs that are transmitted from generation to generation. It could also mean routine ways of behaviour passed on from one generation to another. Tradition will always be an integral part to who we are. Its impact on us will not wane because it is simply part of our foundation in human existence.

Fast forward to the main discussion, I would like to draw your attention to some familiar things we usually see happening in our surroundings and mostly do not have full knowledge on how they came about but probably we can easily guess why they exist. Here are some customs that are still being passed on from one generation to the other like protecting babies from evil attacks using a baby's own residual umbilical chord. You would agree with me that mostly when we go into villages, we find babies tied a string around their necks and to it hanging a tiny pillow-like thing. Here is how the apparatus comes about..

When a baby is born and discharged from the hospital, in a Malawian setting, the baby stays indoors(Chikuta/Chilowelo) until the residual umbilical chord wilts and drops from the tummy. The wilted umbilical chord is then soaked in water and it is this water that is used to wash the baby. Thereafter, the soaked wilted umbilical chord is wrapped on a piece of cloth and sewn together with a string, reasonably long and tough enough, to fit a baby's neck and not to break before it rots and drops on its own. Usually the sewn piece of cloth inhabiting the dropped umbilical

chord takes shape of a pillow. This process is mostly undertaken by the new mother's grandmother, mother or a knowledgeable older female guardian.

It is believed that when the wilted umbilical chord get into the wrong hands can be used for rituals to hurt the newborn and or make ritualistic riches. Therefore, careful and hideous disposal is a must. Others dispose it off at a confluence (where rivers cross), in cases where rivers are not available, it is buried on a dumpy ground- you would quickly conclude that for easy and faster decomposition. well, maybe you are right but according to the sources I enquired from said that "we all know water is life therefore desposing the chord on a dry land means inhibit the growth of the newborn and that the baby may not live long". Desposing it off at a dumpy place means more life and growth for the newborn.

In my opinion the whole point is to ensure that the chord is disposed off safely. For the most times humans do not trust each other therefore tightening it to a string around a baby is to make sure it decomposes and that at the time it drops, it is useless for ritualsl or any evil activities and witchcraft.



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# Literary corner



## ENGLISH

**Person A:** How are you?  
**Person B:** I am fine. How are you?  
**Person A:** I am also fine. How much are you selling the tomatoes for?  
**Person B:** 100 kwacha and 200 kwacha.  
**Person A:** I'll buy tomatoes worth 200 kwacha..

## CHICHEWA

**Person A:** Muli bwanji ?  
**Person B:** Ndili bwino kaya inu.  
**Person A:** Ndili bwinonso. Tomato mukupanga bwanji?  
**Person B:** 100 kwacha ndi 200 kwacha.  
**Person A:** Ndigula wa 200 kwacha.

## CHIYAO

**Person A:** Ali uli ?  
**Person B:** Ndili chenene kwali wajo?  
**Person A:** Ndili chenene. Tomato mbiya zilingwa?  
**Person B:** 100 kwacha ndi 200 kwacha.  
**Person A:** Chisume ja 200 kwacha.

## CHILHOMWE

**Person A:** Mokhalha phama?  
**Person B:** Nokhalha phama khaya nyuwano?  
**Person A:** Nokhalha phama. Munamwerha bwanji bwanji  
mathimathi olha?  
**Person B:** 1 handede kwacha na 2 handede kwacha  
**Person A:** Kinamukulhe a 2 handede kwacha

## CHITUMBUKA

**Person A:** Muli uli?  
**Person B:** Nili makola, kwali mwanyithu.  
**Person A:** Nili makola, Mapuno mukugulitsa ndalamu zilinga?  
**Person B:** Ili pa mtengo wa k 100 unyake uli pa k200.  
**Person A:** Nigulenge wa k200.

## CHITONGA

**Person A:** Mweuli?  
**Person B:** Teumapha, kwali imwi?  
**Person A:** Nani ndeumapha, Ndizilinga tomato?  
**Person B:** Uwu weyapa ndigulisa k 100 unyakiwo  
wo wa k 200.  
**Person A:** Ndipaseniku wo wa k200.

## CHILAMBYA

**Person A:** Muli akiza?  
**Person B:** Ndakiza, kali umwe?  
**Person A:** Ndakiza, U tomato mukughuzya zilinga'  
**Person B:** Yumo tukughuzya k 100 yumo k200.  
**Person A:** Tingule uwa k200.

## CHISENA

**Person A:** Muli pyadidi?  
**Person B:** Ndilipysadidi, penumbo imwe?  
**Person A:** Matimati mukuchita tanitani?  
**Person B:** 100 kwach na 200 kwacha.  
**Person A:** Ndinakwata wa 200 kwacha.

## **LET IT DIE TO LIVE**

**By Joseph Misoma**

I got out of bed this morning  
 First thing I heard was not birds singing  
 Even before the sun signed in  
 The hustle and bustle was on-going

Music in the night  
 Vehicles through the night  
 People live the night  
 Life has conquered it

The day is for making hay  
 The fresh grass is where the others lay  
 Took my sickle and rope and went into the fray  
 Felt like a stranger on a road my hands made

I am more than assured  
 There has to be more cars than us walking by  
 I look into the sky  
 They must be closer to God sitting atop those towers

I see much I left unnoticed  
 How much change there sure must have been  
 How impersonal everyone is  
 How much less unity is in the commune  
 I 'requiemed' the ever applauded warm heart demeanor  
 It surely must have taken a more suitable form  
 I imagined the collage of distinct cultures  
 Now not unlike the ruins, pyramids and Coliseums

All that is left of the old is pillars of stone  
 The very definitions of the past that die slow  
 Mere meat-less heritage is all there is to show  
 I doubt there is a point at having another go  
 It is easier to carry just the treasure chest than the whole sinking boat

## **ENVIRONMENT SPEAK**

**By Esther Teneth**

If only you were in my shoes,  
 You would understand this pain.  
 If only you were like me,  
 You would empathise with my feeling.  
 If only you knew what I know,  
 You would stop your raised axe.  
 If only you knew my reaction,  
 You would quit your destructive actions.  
 You abuse me,  
 Yet you depend on me.  
 You abase me,  
 Yet without me you can't survive.  
 I stripe you naked,  
 Yet when dressed up you forget it all.  
 You spread your wings,  
 Yet this whole earth is mine.  
 If only you had known,  
 I pity you a lot.  
 You are vulnerable,  
 Yet you are still bossing.  
 I won't repeat my words; leave your  
 unmerited one side benefits and take care of  
 me your master!

## **MOTHER**

**By Innocent Nyondo**

Mother,  
 The walk that you took,  
 Long and threatening, love was the hook,  
 That held you and me,  
 That sustained me,

Mother,  
 Today is like any day,  
 But today is about many a day,  
 When young and fragile all I knew was your  
 voice,  
 Sweet, tender, caring not by choice,  
 Because you represented a uniqueness,  
 That has given humanity its happiness,

Mother,  
 Smile today,  
 It is your day,  
 Here, let me take care of that pot!  
 For a moment let your life be free of this fire  
 that is so blazing and hot,  
 Today is the day I will say it all,  
 Some think I have always been great, huh!  
 Remember mum when I was small,

Mother,  
 For your love and care I will forever be in  
 debt,  
 But Today, I will pay half of it I bet!

## **THE GULE WAMKULU**

**By Felix Masina**

They say they are animals  
 We comprehend they are humans  
 They call them spirits  
 Yet, our naked eyes behold them  
 They claim to be fished  
 But our eyes agree of their emergence from the bushes  
 As fierce as they look and act  
 Yet their dance is filled with elegance  
 The pride in getting their bodies dirty  
 Crafts the beauty of it  
 The secrets behind the energetic exhibition  
 Should receive no questions  
 Say not the name behind the mask and regalia  
 Lest you provoke the anger of the spirits  
 As onlookers  
 Just enjoy the dance

# THE KACHERE TREE

By Frank Phiri Manere

On that beautiful afternoon, we all gathered at Chief Zinthuli's compound, waiting to snoop from his mouth full of wisdom that he has exceptionally proved over the past four decades since he was installed as the chief of our village. It was the case between Old Makupe 'the Namkungwi' (initiation ceremonies head advisor) and the parallels of Abrahamic Faith over the cancellation of the initiation ceremonies in our area. This was so because our area was HIV/AIDS infested and the Church in the wake of post-Christian era argued that this was so due to the anamkungwi and their cultural advocacies.

As per argument, the church through their spokesperson, Mr. Liphuka, claimed that kulowa kufa, kusasa fumbi, chokolo, fisi, chitelera and other cultural practices are the chief reasons behind the ever increasing prevalence of the disease. He formally pointed fingers at Old Makupe as the sole culprit, arguing that his initiation ceremonies encourage the HIV/AIDS related deaths invading innocent homes in our area. He even said that Old Makupe will have to answer to God on the Day of Judgment personally on the deaths of such people. Rumors, though, have been speculating over the years that Makupe and Liphuka, who were age mates, have been adversaries even during the days of their youth. They attended the same zoma (initiation camp), same school where they were shown the exit door because of their frequent fist exchanges. Even during their hunting days, they would quarrel for unknown reasons. Their parents, as we are told, have tried to bring their boys together to work out their rancor but all efforts proved futile. After they grew up, they eventually took their different destinies, one a Namkungwi while the other got interested in religious undertakings and became one of the decision makers in the only church of the area.

We thought that from what Mr Liphuka said, it was a straightforward win of the case. The church said that formal schools should be the only way for our children and nothing else. He said that, "I would recommend that our children should only be shown two doors, the church door and the school door. The other door you are taking them to, is killing them, is teaching them obscenity, inculcating the rudeness and sexual immorality. How would you tell a 10 year boy or girl about kusasa fumbi?" What do we have to do with chokolo these days? Kulowa kufa, these are heathen and will lead us to desolation and doom." He continued, "In those days, Makupe here will concur with me, children were not initiated, it was only big boys, at least 17 or 18 or above, not as they are doing with kids today. How would you tell a 12 year old about sex? How?" God is not happy with such and therefore I call upon the end of the ceremonies in this area." His over-wrinkled face proved how furious he

was after saying this.

Chief Zinthuli looked at the crowd, then at Old Makupe whose turn it was to say his mind on the accusation levelled against him. He cleared his throat and made a few coughs. He licked his lips which were so dry and smiled uneasily. Judging from appearance, one would assume that he had nothing to say but here he went. "Here, I do not intend to sound so impolite but if in any way I sound so, forgive me because I'm just a human. We cannot run away from the fact that HIV is a thorn in our flesh nowadays. What I don't know is whether this so called HIV is caused by the cultural traditions you have listed. At least, what I know is that we have known these traditions since we were born and none about HIV. I will politely comment nothing about your faith. About initiating kids, you have said that we are teaching kids obscenity, but trust me, obscenity is fiercely taught in your schools even with illustrations, and as if that is not enough, they label them accordingly. A standard five pupil, who in most cases is just 10 years old, is taught the nakedness of her parents in pictures, notes, and even forced to memorize, and as if that is not enough again, she is encouraged to remember because she will be examined. If she fails the exam, she is forced to repeat that class so that she should thoroughly memorize reproduction, dangerous sexual contents, relationships and ways in which she can protect herself from unsafe sex as you put it. You are destroying our kids in video shows as well since they are exposed to pornography. When they are coming to Simba they are already equipped with obscenity and immorality." He continued, "And at the end, you point your five fingers at my initiation camp. So well, so you can go on with your closing endeavors, I have no problem with that because one thing I know for sure is that the disease you are talking about will not come to an end with the closure of my Simba if people are not abstaining, or being faithful or using condoms." Maybe I am still the Namkungwi today, just as a cultural custodian, maybe just to keep the ways of our forefathers, maybe so that after us, the old guards die, our children should still remember who their fathers were, where they came from and what they used to do. Maybe."

As soon as he sat down, people didn't know whether to clap hands or to laugh or to ululate or to smile at him, because of how he managed to defend our culture. Chief Zinthuli was mouth agog, not knowing what to say. Every one of us dispersed one by one after we saw that no one was saying anything. We are hoping to gather again at the famous Kachere tree for another case. This tree is believed to disappear at night as the accounts of some people have it and people say that some have tried to cut it down but when they cut it, the next morning they find it there.

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# Fireside Wisdom..... With Aubrey Kasunda

Around the fireside is where most children learn a lot from their parents and grandparents. Join us as we explore wisdom that is passed from generation to generation by our esteemed elders.

## Myths and Taboos

**01**

A pregnant woman is not allowed to see a deceased person. It is believed among the Chewa that doing so the woman will deliver a child of a ghost.

**02**

When a woman is pregnant, the husband is not allowed to sleep around with other women. It is believed that this behavior causes miscarriages and still birth. If a woman miscarries for two or three times the husband is summoned and charged a goat to chase away the spirit that is killing the unborn babies.

**03**

In ancient times children were forbidden to attend the funeral or point their fingers at the graveyard.

-they were told if they dare to point fingers, their fingers will be paralysed  
-they were forbidden from attending any funeral to a point of being locked in the house until the whole funeral process was over.

\*\*Morally the essence of all this, was to protect them from having night mares and instil fear feeling concerning death, considering the fact that death is unfriendly thing

**04**

Standing where elders are sitting implies draining them of their blood. This indirectly teaches young persons that they need to cut off their rudeness.

### Get to Know Proverbs

*Ndapakonda anasiya m'khonde. (Literally meaning "I love it here left his belongings along the veranda")*

In villages usually people store some of their belongings under the roof across the veranda. Long ago a certain man chose to stay at his wife's village. His relatives advised him to leave her wife's village and settle elsewhere. He stubbornly replied that "I love it here". As time went by he was chased (divorced), he left the village in hurry and he couldn't even take his belongings from where he kept them across the veranda not even his tradition cup (chikho). This proverb teaches against stubbornness.





# How to make Lambya drums

By Davie Moses Simengwa



The cow skin is used to make the drum membrane, this is also known as i-chikwela. The skin is chosen for its durability which is dependent on its thickness. Some Lambya drums are made of antelope or goat skin so that they can produce a loud, projected sound. Before fixing it on the drum frame, the skin is left to dry for some days, usually a week, to make it sturdy.

It is then soaked in a well or a large basin for one night to soften it and make it pliable. Afterwards, it is left in the sun for a reasonable time to allow the water to evaporate completely.

The drum maker then cuts off a section of the skin that is slightly bigger than the drum head and fixes it on to the drum frame using wooden pegs. This time the drum frame is partially dipped in the ground and supported by a number of stones.

The sculptor then removes the fur on the section of the skin that will form the drum membrane using a knife or razor blade. When an antelope skin rather than a cow skin is used, the fur is not scraped off by a knife; the drummers' hands naturally remove the fur in the process of playing – in this case, the older the drum the better its performance. The two-common types of the drum found in Lambya society are cylindrical and double headed drums. Most Lambya cylindrical drums have tar (phula) fixed in the centre of the drum head.

The phula is made from special tree sap or honey comb. The purpose of the tar is to make the drum head heavier for desired resonance. The drum maker then tunes the drum by passing it above fire flames several times.

In the process, he keeps checking whether the drum is properly tuned by beating it at intervals. The tuned drum is sometimes smeared with castor oil for preservation. Therefore, this is how the Lambyas make their drums.

# Did You Know ?

Mother's day was initially celebrated on monday of second week of October. It was changed to 15 october by the late president Dr Bingwa Munthalika so that it coincides with International Day of Rural Women





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# Malawi in History



- **Plane Crash in Chiradzulo  
on Sunday 19 October 1958**
- **Once Upon a Time**
- **The Legend**
- **October in History**



# Plane crash in Chiradzulu on Sunday 19 October 1958

By Paliani Gomani Chinguwo

Barely three months after Dr. Kamuzu Banda landed at Chileka Airport in Blantyre, on his mission to lead the struggle for independence of Nyasaland after spending 40 years abroad, air tragedy occurred in Nyasaland on Sunday, the 19th October 1958, in Chiradzulu district.

All the six people on board were killed when the two-engine French Air Force plane called Douglas crashed into the slopes of Chiradzulu Mountain (5,000 ft high), near the top, a few minutes after departing Chileka Airport in Blantyre.

The Douglas had flown from Paris. At 8:30AM on Sunday, the 19th October 1958, it left Chileka Airport taking the eastward direction towards Arivonimamo Airport in Madagascar, about 1,342 km away. It was in contact with the control tower at Chileka Airport after take-off. A few minutes later, communication with the Douglas from the control tower was suddenly lost.

The pilot of the crashed Douglas was Lieut. Jacques Laguibre and his navigator was Capt. Georges Mercier. The other four on board were Georges Moraud, Bernard Mereau, Louis Coundray and Georges Babyle.

The first people to arrive at the site of the crash were the French Consul to Nyasaland Major. M. Bobilier and Assistant Commissioner of Nyasaland Police Mr. Peter Long who collaborated to organise and supervise the rescue mission.

The rescue mission comprised of the police, hospital staff, government clerks, forestry workers, and inhabitants of the surrounding villages. The crashed plane was split open and lodged in a large tree on the





edge of a 100 feet drop. The dead bodies were found lying below and scattered 100 ft down the cliff.

The efforts by the rescue mission were heavily hampered by the drenching rains and the slippery slopes. They had nothing to hold on to and no firm foothold. This put the rescuers themselves at a huge risk as they were slipping and sliding along while hauling the dead bodies to the mountain top and then down the slopes on stretchers.

The bodies of the deceased were flown out of the country to Madagascar on the Tuesday, the 21st October 1958, after conducting a memorial service at Chileka Airport officiated by a Catholic priest followed by a guard of

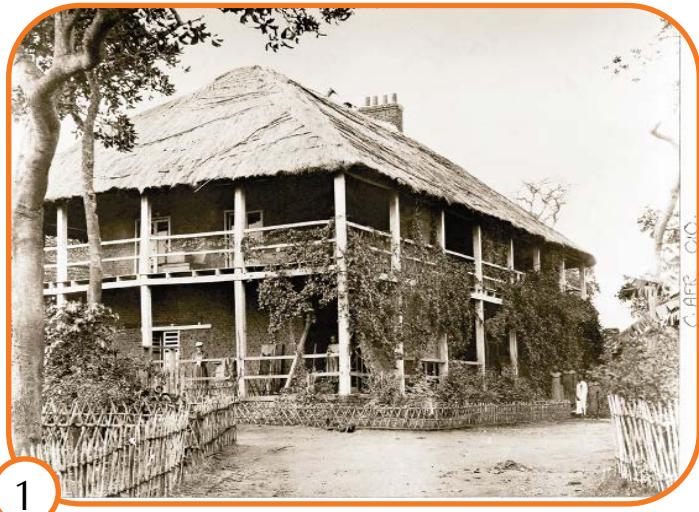
honour by military officers from the King African Rifles (KAR).

The plane carrying the dead bodies was another French Air Force Douglas that had earlier landed at Chileka Airport from Madagascar with French officers who were dispatched to conduct an inquiry into the crash.

Present at the memorial service were representatives of French Consulate in Southern Rhodesia and French Consul in Nyasaland Major M. Bobilier, Mayor of Blantyre/Limbe Mr. A. Conn and the Provincial Commissioner (South) Major P. Nicholson who represented the Governor of Nyasaland, Sir Robert Armitage.

The scrap material from the plane were sold to a company called Northern Scrap Metal & Co.

## Once Upon a Time



1

Mandala House, Blantyre 1886



2

Mandala House, Blantyre 2020



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EMBRACING BEAUTY OF AFRICA





LEGEND

# Dr. Rachel Chimwemwe Sibande

Science is mostly considered as a male-dominated field. According to United Nations data, less than 30% of scientists worldwide are women. The case is much worse here in Malawi. For the few women who are in science, there are even fewer who are interested in ICT and technology. According to European Parliament, there are only 9% of women who are developers and only 19% of women who are in management positions in ICT sector.

However, despite challenges of gender discrimination and lack of support in the scientific community, Dr. Rachel Chimwemwe Sibande is an inspiration to both women and men in Malawi and beyond in ICT field. Dr. Sibande has made historic contributions towards science and her achievements have helped this country and beyond. Indeed, Dr. Sibande really worked hard for the betterment of this country, hence she is considered as one of the Malawian Legends. The following is an account of Dr. Sibande in respect to her contributions and achievements in science.

1. Born on 9th January, 1986.
2. She attended Our Lady of Wisdom Secondary School.
3. In 2006, she graduated with a credit from University of Malawi, Chancellor College, studying for a Bachelor's degree in science, majoring in Computer Science.
4. After graduating from Chancellor College, she worked with Globe Computer Systems then she joined Kamuzu Academy as a teacher in ICT.
5. She obtained a certificate in Financial Accounting from Public Accountants Examination Council of Malawi in 2006.
6. In 2007, she went to study for Masters of Science in Information Theory, Coding and Cryptography at Mzuzu University and graduated with a distinction in 2010.
7. While studying at Mzuzu University, she taught Statistics as an Adjunct lecturer in the Department of Mathematics.
8. She obtained a certificate in Wireless Networking from International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) Italy in 2008.
9. She has a certificate in Wireless Networking from Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) which she acquired in 2008.
10. In 2010, she got a fully funded PhD scholarship from Institute of Markets Technologies (IMT Lucca), but had to forego the opportunity as it coincided with the birth of her first child.
11. She is Alumna of President Obama's Young African Leaders Initiative (2012)
12. In 2014, she worked as technology expert at Malawi Electoral Commission during 2014 general election.
13. In 2015, she obtained her PhD at Rhodes University in South Africa .
14. In 2015, she received the Anita Borg Scholarship from Google, now called the TechWomen Scholarship programme.
15. In 2015, she offered technical support on ICT for the Tanzanian general elections.
16. She founded Malawi's first technology hub, mHub.
17. In 2016, she was Malawi's Ambassador of the Next Einstein Forum Initiative which promotes science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).
18. In 2016, she became the first local licensee for TEDx in Malawi.
19. In 2016, she was named as one of Africa's 30 most promising entrepreneurs under the age of 30 by Forbes Magazine.
20. In 2016 she was listed as one of the top 40 innovators under 40 in Africa.
21. She has a certificate of Entrepreneurship for Scientists and Engineers obtained from International Centre for Theoretical Physics(ICTP) Italy in 2016
22. In 2017, she was named among 100 most positively inspiring youths by Positive Youth Africa (PYA)
23. In 2018, she won K18 million for pitching innovative ideas at the Next Einstein Forum (NEF) Global Gathering in Rwanda.
24. Currently she is working as Program Director, Data for Development, DIAL at the United Nations Foundation.

# October in History...With Earnest Chapotera

**01. October 1943:** James Frederick Sangala took the unprecedented step of issuing a "circular letter to all African residents in Nyasaland" through two Nyasaland newspapers, The Nyasaland Times and the South African magazine (Bantu Mirror). The letter stated that "experience has taught that unity is strength . . . the time is ripe now for the Africans in this country to strive for unity so as to obtain the greater development of the people and country of Nyasaland. Sangala pleaded and appealed to "all Africans and leaders of this country to give their support so that our race should have a place among the civilized.

**02. October 1944:** W.V Rose, the agricultural officer, based at Masambanjati in Thyolo listed over 50 Malawians whom he recommended to D.C for tougher punishment, considering that his department had been teaching them how to make ridges for more than 5 years but they were failing to make ridges.

**03. October 1944:** Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) held its first meeting in Blantyre and Levi Mumba was elected as its first President.

**04. October 1953:** Three Malawian demonstrators were killed in the fight (Known as Nkhondo ya thomusoni) that broke out between local settlers and colonial state officials at the Domasi sub district, about sixteen kilometers from the former colonial capital of Zomba, Malawi. Several other demonstrators and colonial state employees were wounded in the ensuing fight.

**05. October 1958:** Dr. H.K Banda had an inconclusive meeting with the secretary for African affairs, John Ingham followed by a very cordial discussion with Armitage at which Dr. Banda indicated to the governor that he was prepared to make some concessions in the demand for universal suffrage

**06. October 1964:** Masauko Chipembere left Malindi and went to hide himself with a party of seven in the mountains. Parliament was about to debate a constitutional amendment to permit detention without trial and Chipembere suspected that he would be the first to be detained

**07. October 1965:** As a direct result of the challenge in power presented in Cabinet Crisis of 1964, MCP hold convention which adopted a constitution which made Malawi a one-party state.

**08. October 1967:** Rose Chiwambo took refuge in Zambia after Dr H.K Banda suspended her from cabinet.

**09. October 1967:** Yatuta Chisiza and band of supporters attempted a coup d'etat (known as Mwanza War). He wanted to overthrow Dr. H.K Banda as the president of Malawi. It was during this 'war' that Yatuta Chisiza and his lieutenant Lutengano Mwahimba were shot dead while 5 of their compatriots escaped successfully to Zambia as one committed suicide when 9 had been captured alive, later tried at the high and supreme courts in Blantyre, hanged (except one among them who became a state witness) and finally buried in unmarked graves in Zomba in 1969

**10. October 1975:** Fern Najere Sadyalunda was appointed as the first female cabinet minister on Community Development and Social Welfare.

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# Country Tour



- **Malape Pillars; The Mysterious Pillar - Like Structures,**
- **Mzimba in Brief**
- **Zomba Plateau in Pictures**





# Malape Pillars, The Mysterious Pillar- Like Structures

By Madalitso Kachingwe

Nestled within the Chikala Hills in the south eastern part of Malawi, Malape Pillars give a picturesque, panoramic view that is sure to leave the observer mouth agape. When you take a look at them while on the high ground, the view stimulates your mind to think of Hanging Gardens of Babylon since they look identical. But the fact that they are situated in Machinga District, brings back your senses to normal settings. Some locals insist on calling them Chikala Pillars while others prefer the name of Malape. But the latter is their real name. Hearing of their description for the first time makes many a skeptic. Many take it as just a fairy tale, but these pillar-like structures are real.

Their formation resulted from the constant sandstorms that used to hit the area a long time ago. Erosion is also credited to the same ends. Geological research asserts that these pillars are formed due to puddles of crystals which protect the columns of grit underneath as the rains erode the surrounding unprotected areas. As the sides of the canyon erode and the crystal blocks tumble off, beautifully sculpted pillars remain.

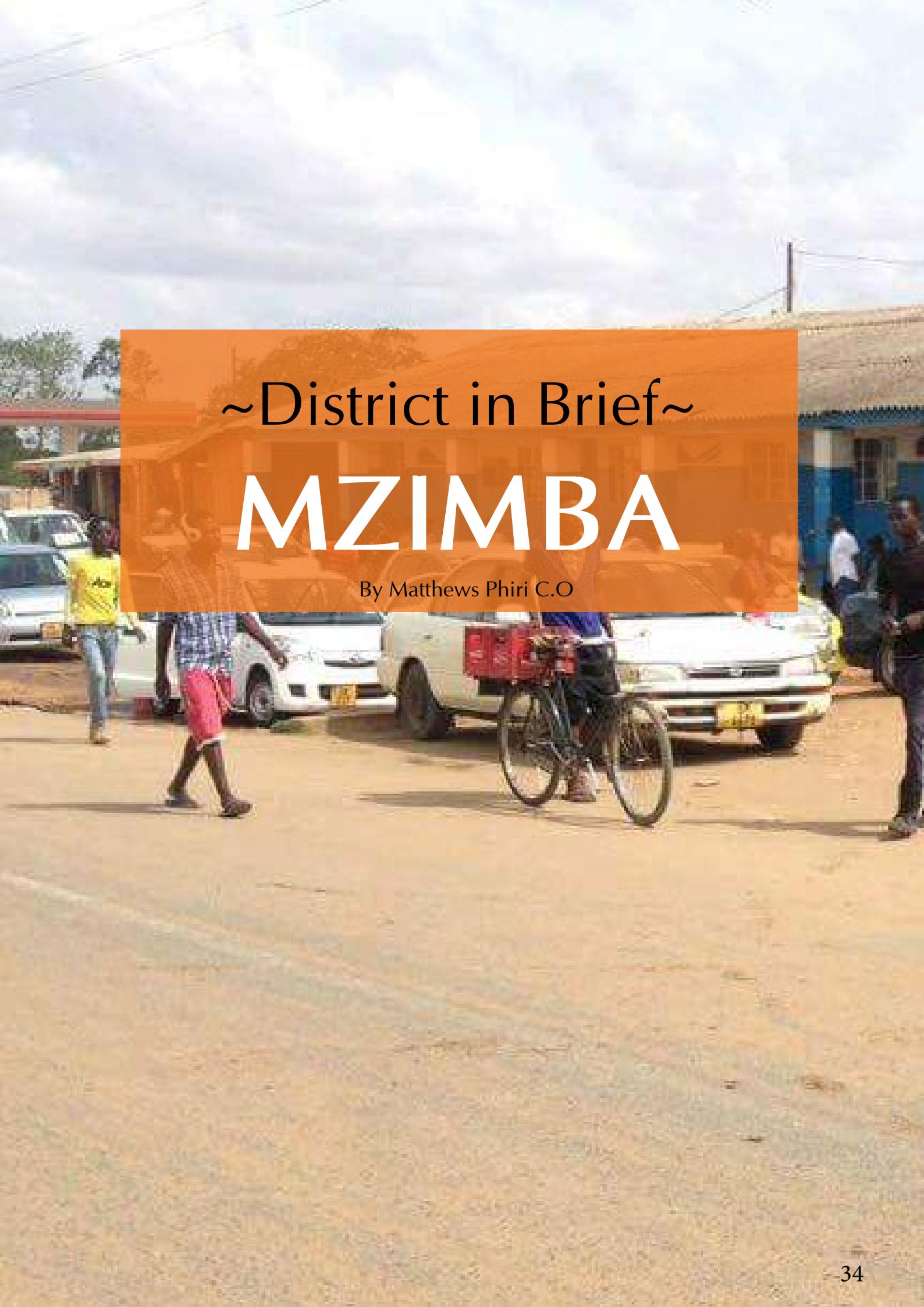
Oral history, on the other hand, contends that the pillars were formed by some superhuman forces. It is believed that they are the craftsmanship of the spirits. Locals claim that the pillars used to accommodate the said spirits in the compartment-like spaces. Due to this supposed divine status, no one would dare visit them of his own accord without following apt procedures. People have been reportedly missing without a trace in the past years. The alleged disappearances have been attributed to the angry spirits that were residing at this catchy place. Rumours have it that the voice of a person could be heard clearly from a short distance, but no person could be seen. These frightening events made

Malape pillars to be regarded as a sacred place and a person couldn't roam within them anyhow. Performance of sacrificial rituals was the only means of accessing these legendary pillars. Children had no chance of visiting the pillars since the spirits favoured only old people.

Interestingly, it is said that at a certain point in time, one of the pillars had a cross on top. This resulted in the Roman Catholic Church holding some of their Eucharistic ceremonies there. Another pillar had a moon shape and this lured people of Islamic faith. This shows how the pillars have been glue to the communities around and beyond.

Nowadays, it has turned out to be the centre of tourist attraction both locally and internationally. People from all walks of life have now started visiting the place in large numbers to appreciate this hidden treasure. It is the place that a person should at least one point in their life time visits to see one of the outstanding landforms that God blessed Mother Malawi with.

However, deforestation in recent years has jeopardized its scenic view as some pillars get washed away whenever torrential rain comes. The site's charming view is at risk of being altered to something undesirable. If appropriate actions to conserve this precious natural endowment are not given a priority, then it will disappear forever.

A photograph of a dirt road in a rural area. In the foreground, a person in a pink shirt and shorts walks away from the camera. Behind them, a white van is parked. A person on a bicycle is also visible. The background shows simple buildings and trees under a cloudy sky.

# ~District in Brief~

# MZIMBA

By Matthews Phiri C.O



The strangeness of a place is essentially embodied in the mysteries it keeps. It's about its geography. It's about its history. It's about its people and their administration. And it's about their culture. Perhaps, little is known about Mzimba not because there is nothing to know about it, but because those who are in need of such knowledge consider themselves well-schooled already and, consequently, miss out on how much else there is to know about this exciting mass land. Finding a place among the Northern districts of Malawi, Mzimba harbours wonders of its own ranging from its people predominantly Ngoni immigrants; the size and shape of the land itself, the geographical built and the nature of its administration.

Mzimba is Ngoni word which means "body". In the distant past, there were some moves to divide Mzimba into two parts for reasons that development funds are divided too thinly over a large district, many chiefs under M'mbelwa objected to the decision. Key to their argument was the fact that if one divides the body, Mzimba in this particular case, they will end up with a dead animal or person. The argument of the owners of the district carried the day. And they were right. Population size and not mass land affects distribution of development activities.

Mzimba people are generally small scale crop farmers who compete with cattle breeders. The Western side though has boasted producing cash crops especially tobacco, but most people in the interior grow maize both for sale and consumption.

Mzimba is a Ngoni district. There are many tribes however who found place in the district including Tumbukas, Chewas and Tongas. Most people in Mzimba speak various dialects of Tumbuka depending on the location of the place. The Northern part of Mzimba speaks Tumbuka which resembles the Tumbuka being spoken in Rumphi, the home of the language. Those on the Eastern side of the Mzimba speak a language which is a mixture of Chichewa, Chitumbuka and Tonga. Those close to Kasungu speak Tumbuka which has largely Chichewa nuances. The West is divided because we have some communities that still speak Ngoni but other people have Bemba and Chinyanja dialects from neighbouring

Zambia. The culture of Mzimba people is not as clear cut when it comes to rites of passage especially those that involve growing up. Young men unlike young women are left to discover themselves about their masculinity and sexuality. Mzimba people are generally hard working and generous. And ironically, they are passive which is not characteristic of Ngoni blood. Perhaps, years of peace have robbed them of the belligerence that they are known for.

It would be blasphemous to the uninitiated to say that Mzimba is not part of Malawi and abominable to the unexperienced to say that Mzimba is a kingdom and M'mbelwa V is the king. Of course, as uncomfortable as the foregoing assertion may sound, the facts remain secured in the annals of old. For far too long nevertheless and for reasons which are unclear, such records have been squirreled away from the light and hidden in the darkness of lack of proper acknowledgement in public debate. In late 1800s, the white colonial masters signed a deal that made Mzimba and Malawi as development partners while fully recognizing the sovereignty of Mzimba. In the course of time, though, such boundaries have been blurred, spurred primarily by political motives and laziness to live to the letter of historical accounts. It is of little wonder that today asking anyone at random they would say that Malawi has 28 districts and Mzimba being one of them. Such is an intellectual dishonesty of the highest order for there is an apparent disregard of history and facts either willfully or due to ignorance. One would be forgiven for the latter but the former is worse.

For the purposes of simplicity however, Mzimba is regarded as the biggest district in Malawi. Mzimba is the home of the biggest man made forest in the world called Chikangawa which runs all the way to Mzuzu. Mzuzu is in Mzimba, remember. The Chikangawa forest though has been poorly managed over the years, was a home of cool air and peculiar weather throughout the year. It was foggy and rainy in Chikangawa while it was all sunny and hot in other places surrounding it. There has been a considerable dissipation of such a condition and it appears memories shall be the relic of old linking us to those glorious times of the past.

1



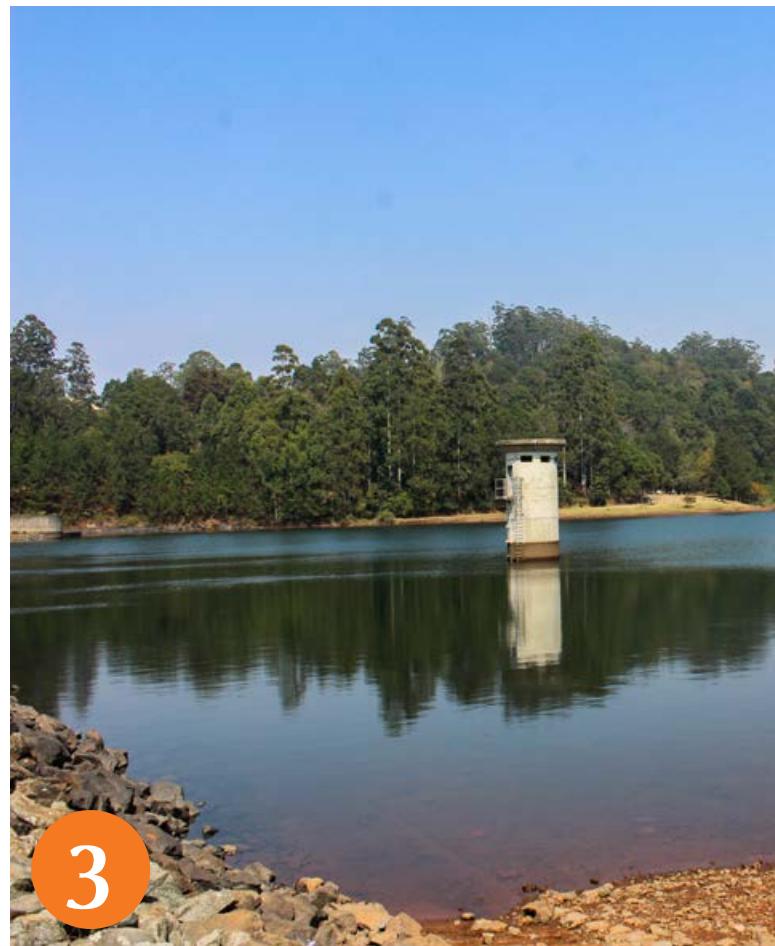
2



## ZOMBA PLATEAU IN PICTURES

1. Arial View of Zomba Plateau
2. Chingwe's Hole
3. Mulunguzi Dam
4. Sunbird Ku Chawe Inn
5. William Falls

3





4

5

# Spark Foods



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# Health

- 
- Health Benefits of Castor (Msatsi)
  - How to Prepare Kalongonda  
(Velvet Beans)



# Health Benefits Of Castor (Msatsi)

By Lazarus Nkolombizo



It is known for a fact that our grandparents lived longer than we live today. This fact has been attributed to the type of food they ate. It was pure organic. These days, a lot of what we eat is processed food, a product of manufacturing industries. Now, the problem with manufacturing industries is that they put too many chemical additives for preservation and taste enhancement. Even though the products are tested before they are sold, you just have to be careful on how much of them you consume. But the genuine remedy is to be more like our grandparents. Consume more organic food.

One of such food items that our grandparents used so much was castor. Its seed was the formula that sustained the long life expectancy of those who came before us. Castor is a plant that produces castor seeds. The seeds are used to treat different diseases after being processed into castor oil, castor powder or by using the seed as it is. The process of extracting the oil from the seeds is done by roasting the dried seed and then pounding it. It is then put in a pot with equivalent water and put on fire to heat it up to separate water from oil. The oil is then taken out. The oil goes under a potent heating process which neutralizes the enzymes and makes it safe to use. On the other hand, the powder is processed by roasting the seed then pounding it into powdery form

Castor has multiple uses. To begin with, castor oil has been used naturally to treat constipation. It simply passes out after completing its purgative action, making the patient feel a mild irritation in the anus at that time. Administration of castor oil as a purgative is very simple. About 30 to 60 grams of pure odorless castor oil is given orally with 250 to 375 grams of lukewarm milk. It acts just after an hour. Those who find its use nauseating and unpalatable, can take it with ginger water in place of milk. This greatly reduces its' unpleasantness, while destroying mucous and promoting healthy appetite

Furthermore, Castor is also a remedy for osteoarthritis. It is also used to treat a disease that causes pain and stiffness in the joints called osteoarthritis. The process is done by applying the oil directly to the skin. Without applying any hospital medicines, the pain and stiffness goes away after sometime.

Castor seeds without the hull are used for birth control. The process is done through adding castor powder into porridge daily. It is argued that doing that for two weeks, a woman will have two years of not getting pregnant. In a similar way, castor oil is used to treat leprosy and syphilis.

The other way of using castor as a means of preventing pregnancy is through soaking it in water. By taking at least ten seeds of castor and soak into 1litre of water for one night, the water can work as a contraceptive method. It is argued that if a woman drinks that water for three days that means she will have three years of not being able to conceive. It is also believed that putting castor oil or powder into the vagina also works as a birth control. However, when it is done while the woman is pregnant in its early stages, the castor can lead to abortion. So, care must be taken.

Castor oil is also called the hair regrowth formula for its ability to allow hair to grow back in places where it has been lost. Scalp infections cause the loss of hair. Castor oil has antibacterial and antifungal properties which make it beneficial against folliculitis, dandruff, and scalp infections and its ricinoleic acid content helps increase the circulation to the scalp and improve hair growth.

Finally, Castor is used to induce labor. Castor oil taken with almond butter, lemon verbena tea and apricot juice can be used to induce labor. The recipe includes, two tablespoons of almond butter, two tablespoons of castor oil, eight ounces of lemon verbena tea and ten ounces of apricot juice. After the mixture has been consumed, labor can be induced within 24 hours if the woman has been pregnant for forty weeks.

Getting medicine from a drug store to ease yourself of some pain may seem to be an easy thing to do. But, as with all things that come easy, there are consequences. So, the next time you find yourself with a health condition that requires a remedy, try the natural remedies. Better so, follow on the remedies that we share in this magazine from time to time, make them and have them available in your house for possible eventualities.



# How To Prepare Kalongonda (Velvet Beans)

By Oscar Mitengo



Population statistics in Malawi show that the country comprises of more than 10 tribes in total. These tribes are known by different cultural aspects including dances, dressing, language, and food. Food remains a key facet of culture for different tribes. It gives people a true sense of cultural identity. It is possible to identify the tribe a person belongs to from the food they eat. We all have different food tastes and sometimes one wonders why certain foods they don't have a taste for are loved by a certain tribe.

Therefore, we are looking at one type of food that is mostly associated with a selected number of tribes. This food is traditionally known as Kalongonda. It is also known as velvet bean in some areas, and has *Mucuna pruriens* as its scientific name. The food is commonly eaten among the Lomwe, Mang'anja and some Yaos in Malawi.

The process of preparing Kalongonda is quite interesting and at times tiresome as it is so involving. It can be processed while it is fresh or dried. When it is processed while in its dry state, the process can cover a couple of days. However, when it is not processed well, Kalongonda is a very dangerous food as it is poisonous. It contains the toxin L-Dopa, which must be removed before it is eaten. It is said that during the Ngoni-Yao tribal war, the Ngoni people were defeated after being tricked to eat poorly cooked Kalongonda. The event happened when the Ngoni people attacked a village of the Yao people near Blantyre. The villagers ran to the top of Malavi hill in terror. Therefore, Ngoni warriors decided to eat the villager's lunch before attacking them. But they ate the big beans after being boiled for just 1 hour instead of the usual 9 hours for thorough preparation. The Ngoni, who had never seen big beans before, ate the poorly cooked big beans greedily and then trotted off to conquer the Yao on the hillside. Just as the raiders reached the lower slopes of the hill, the big beans took effect. The Ngoni began to stagger and fall over. Seizing the opportunity, the Yao began to push boulders over the side of the hill. The story is part of our oral history and only our grandparents know its authenticity.

To avoid the fate that befell the Ngoni, the following procedure guides on how Kalongonda can be properly processed:

# Kalongonda (Velvet Beans)

## Ingredients

Fresh or dried kalongonda seeds, soda or locally made chidulo, salt, 2 tomatoes and 1 onion chopped.

## Instructions

1. Wash the dried Mucuna seeds (Kalongonda) with water.
2. Put the seeds in a pot and add enough water to cover the Mucuna. Boil until the seed coat cracks, adding water when necessary.
3. Remove the seed coat one by one, and wash the peeled seeds thoroughly with clean water.
4. Put back in the pot for a second time, and add enough water to cover the Mucuna. Boil for approximately one hour. The Mucuna will foam while boiling.
5. Remove from the fire and discard the water. The Mucuna softens just like beans when it is ready.
6. Add fresh water, and boil again. The water will turn black after a few minutes. Discard this black water, and add fresh water.
7. Keep repeating step 6, discarding and adding fresh water frequently, until it takes 1.5 hours before the fresh water changes color. This may take up to 8-9 hours if it is dried, but less than that if it is fresh.
8. You can be sure the Mucuna is ready by splitting a seed in the middle. If the center is yellow or creamy in color, repeat step 6. The Mucuna is ready when the center is clear (the whole seed is the same colour).
9. When the Mucuna is ready for eating, the colour is clear.

## The final dish

The well-cooked Kalongonda can be served alone, by just adding table salt. Some would add sliced tomatoes, onions and salad. Others serve it with Nsimá since they regard it as good relish. In some cases, a cooking stick (mpukutso) is used to break kalongonda to form porridge-like substance that is used as delicious meal as well. Add soda or locally produced chidulo to catalyze the process and salt to taste better.



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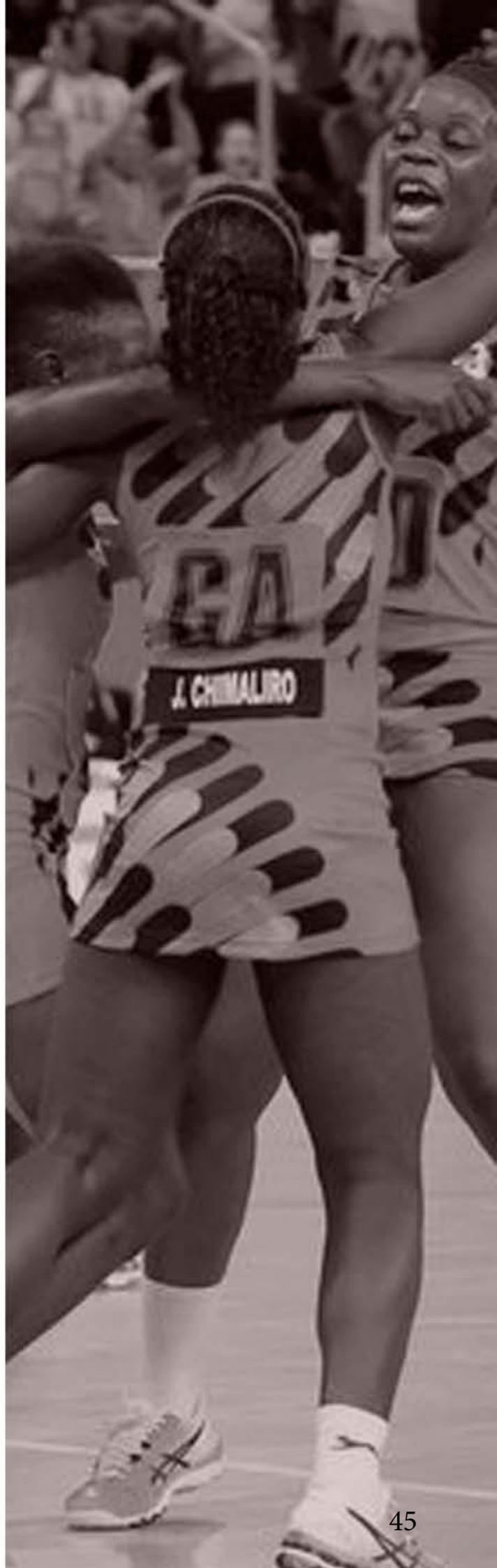
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# Sports in history



- **The Queens**



# Malawi Queens, The Towering Giants Of Intercontinental Netball Competitions

By Madalitso Kachingwe

Popularly known as Queens, Malawi national netball team's prowess has over the years put the country on an unprecedented reading on the international sport bar. Though it arrived and took hold later than football, netball has had more international victories than football. Its unmatched performances have left many a team in the abyss of shame and humiliation. Its maiden appearance in the prestigious World Netball Championships (also known as Netball World Cup) took place on 16 th July, 1995 when they successfully thumped Hong Kong with 56 to 37 baskets at National Indoor Arena, Birmingham in England. They were later thrashed by Jamaican national team with 70 to 52 baskets. There were 27 participants and the Queens finished on 8th position. From that time to date, they have received many international accolades as compared to their male counterparts (Flames).

The year of 2007 witnessed the Queens finishing on position 5 in Netball World Cup tournament that took place in New Zealand. It is regarded as the historical and glorious achievement for the Queens since its debut in 1995. It is the only moment they reached that milestone in the tournament's history. As a result, they were placed on position five on the global rankings and they claimed position one on the African continent.

Besides Netball World Cup competition, the Queens also participate in other international games that attract iconic teams from all continents on the planet. Such competitive games include Commonwealth Games and Fast5 World Netball Series (It is an international Fast5 netball competition that was contested for the first time in October 2009). In the Fast5 competition that took place in 2016 in the city of Melbourne (Australia), the Queens outclassed both England and their continental archrivals, South Africa and finished on the third place narrowly missing in the finals by the hair's breadth. Since it is contested by the world's top six most successful national teams as ranked by the International Netball Federation, countries like South Africa, Jamaica, Australia, England, Malawi and New Zealand dominate the event.

They have also made regular appearances at Commonwealth Games since 2016. Their remarkable wins in the aforementioned tournament were realized in the years of 2010 and 2014 as they ended up on 5th position in both years.

Queens's players are selected from different netball clubs, most specifically depending on their skills, abilities, and competence. Such clubs include Blue Eagles Sisters, Civo Nets, Kukoma Diamonds, Thunder Queens, Mzuzu Queens and Tigresses. Some of the notable players in the history of Malawi Queens are Mary Waya, Mwai Kumwenda, Connie Mhone, Joyce Mvula and Towera Vinthumbo. Since its inception, Griffin Saenda is accredited as the greatest Queens' caretaker of all time since most of the prominent achievements are attributed to his tactical game approaches and Netball Association of Malawi (NAM) is the supreme body that oversees the management and operations of the team. As of 2020, the Queens cherish position 6 in the INF (International Netball Federation) World Rankings.



# Quiz

1. Lake Chilwa has experienced three complete dry ups in its history. Mention the years in which those dry ups occurred in a chronological order.
2. Malawi once hosted the CECAFA CUP and emerged the champions. Which team did they defeat and how many goals did they score to claim the championship?
3. Which word did the name Malawi derived from?
4. Which year did the first version of the popular 'Napolo' song composed? Who did it?
5. After completing his studies in the USA, John Chilembwe returned to Nyasaland in.....

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