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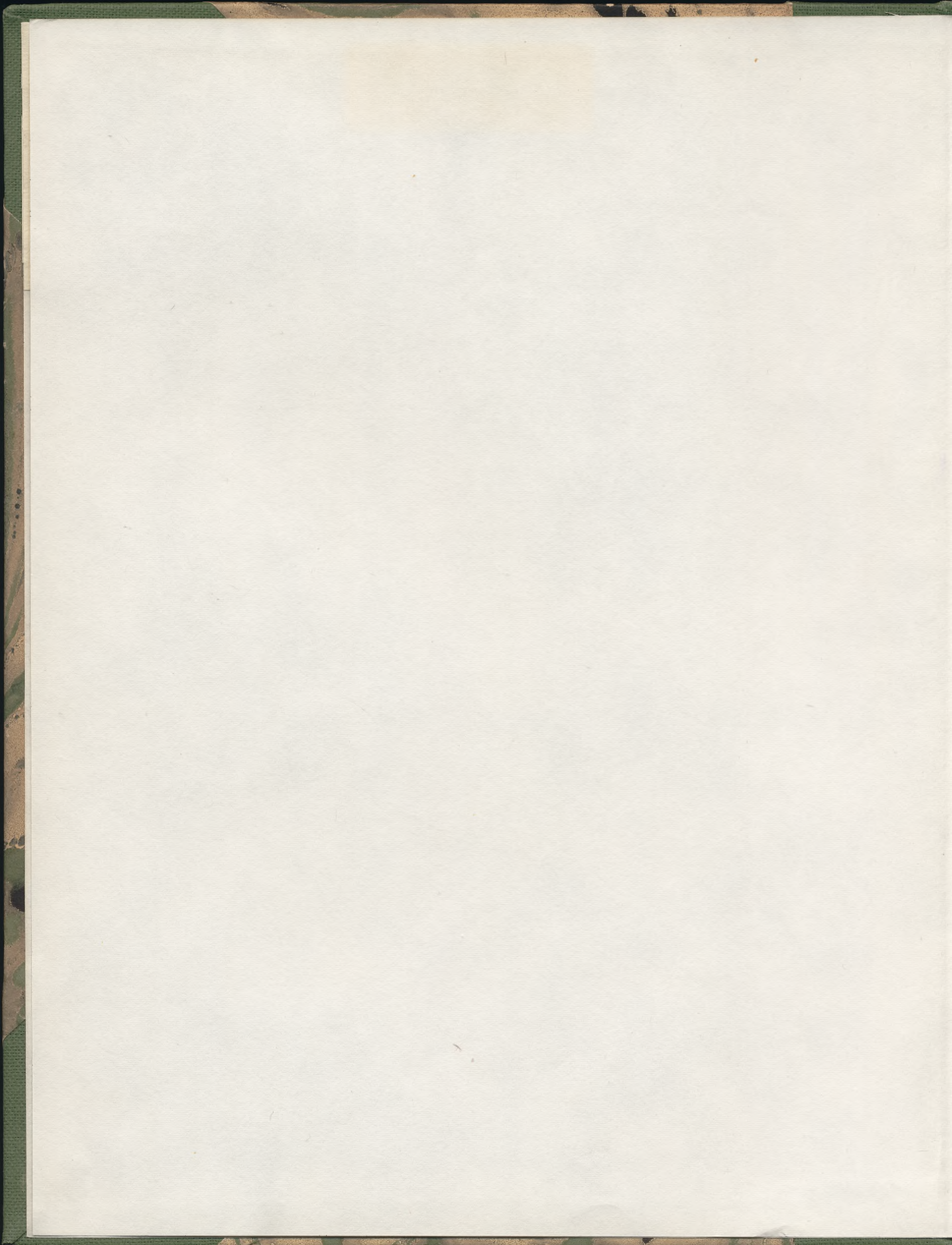
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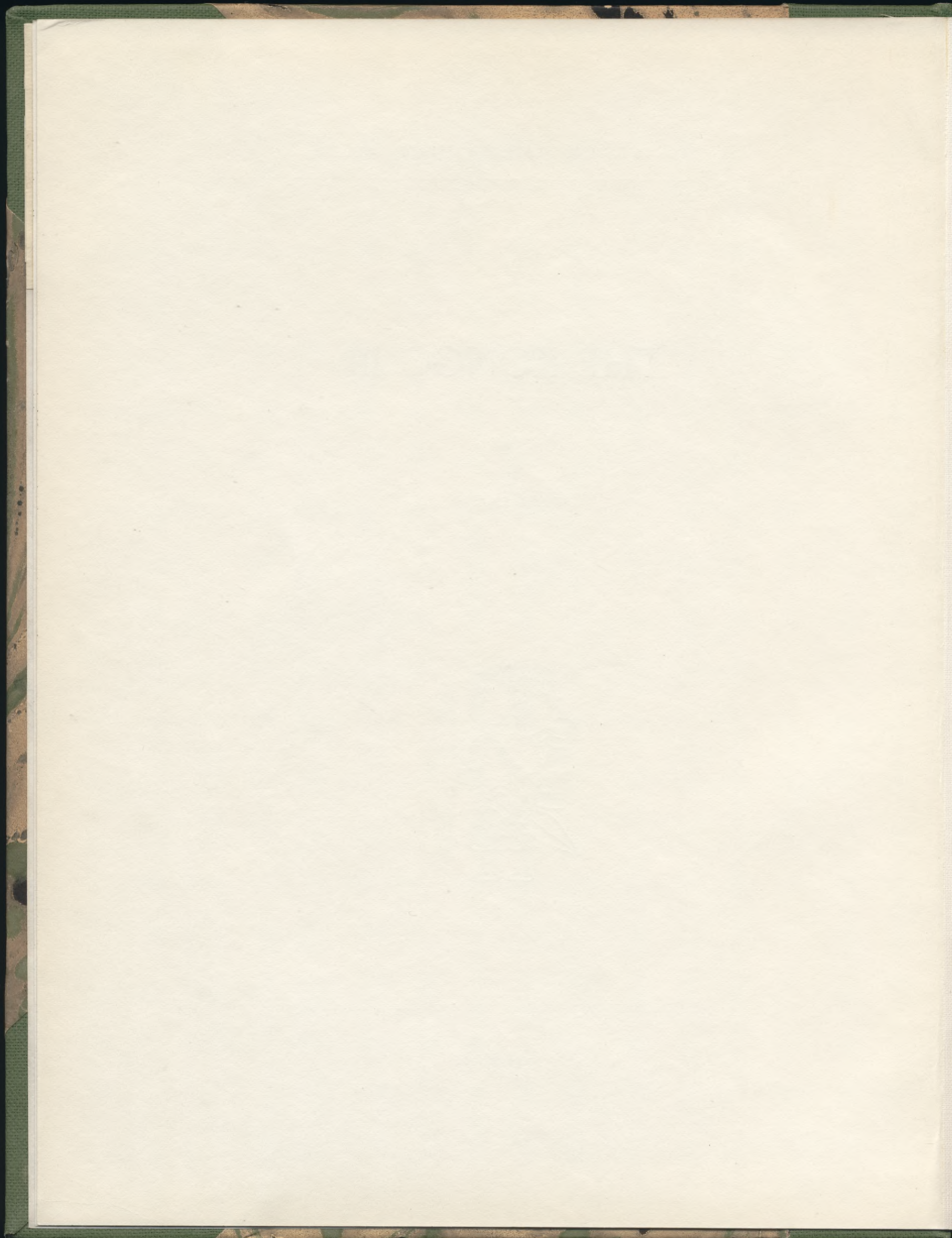
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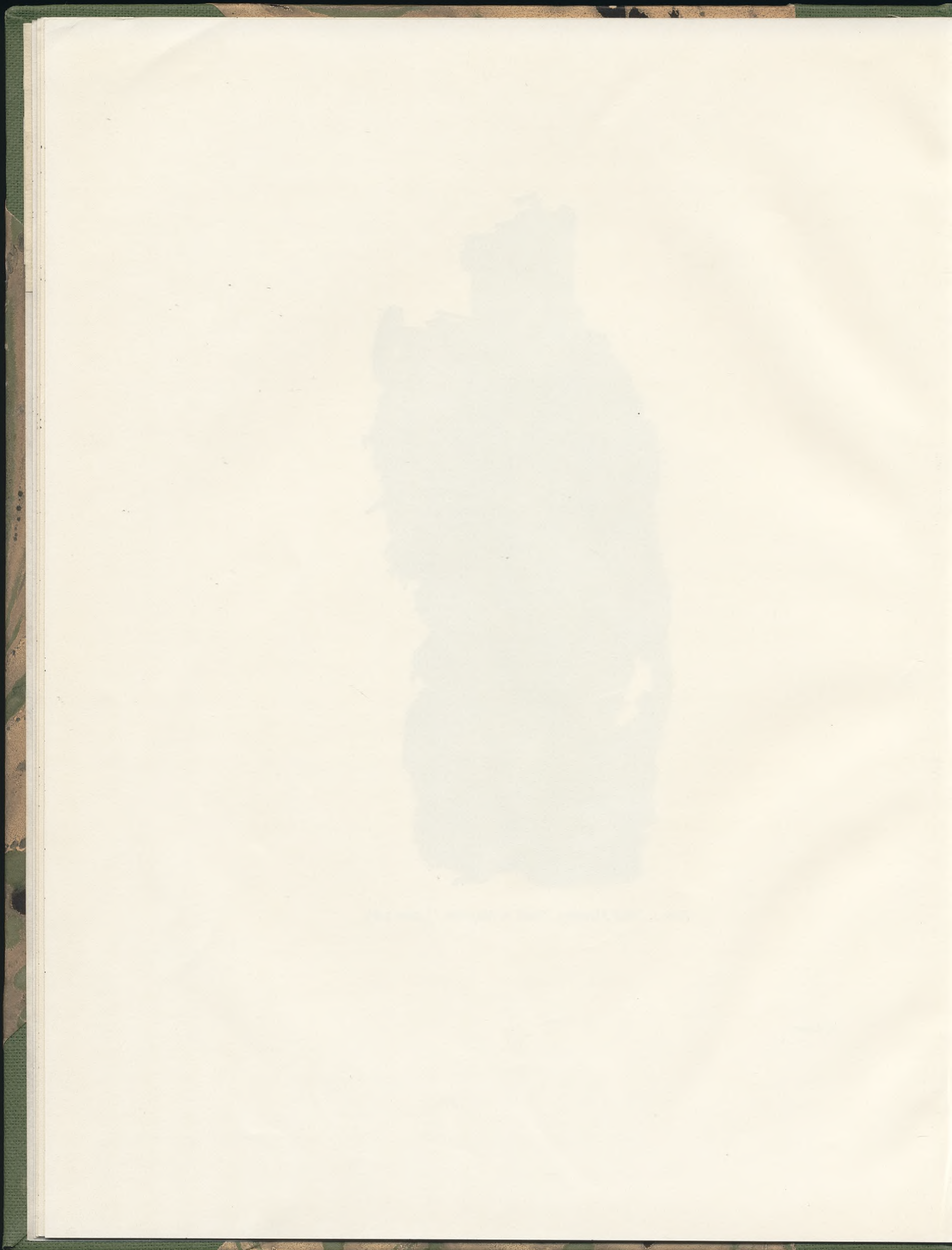
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*Plate 1. Nkisi Mavungu, Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 726).*



# THE KONGO III

BY

KARL LAMAN



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1962

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## CONTENTS

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|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Preface . . . . .   | VII |
| I Conceptions of the Soul . . . . .                             | I   |
| II Sleep and Dreams . . . . .                                   | 7   |
| III The Next Life . . . . .                                     | 14  |
| IV Tales Concerning the Dead . . . . .                          | 25  |
| V Basimbi . . . . .   | 33  |
| VI Ancestor Cult . . . . .                                      | 44  |
| VII Nzambi . . . . .  | 53  |
| VIII Natural Phenomena . . . . .                                | 63  |
| IX Nkisi Cult . . . . .   | 67  |
| X Some Important Minkisi . . . . .                              | 81  |
| XI Bunzi and other Minkisi . . . . .                            | 105 |
| XII Lulendo and other Minkisi . . . . .                         | 118 |
| XIII Dyatu and other Minkisi . . . . .                          | 141 |
| XIV Worship of Minkisi . . . . .                                | 171 |
| XV The Banganga . . . . .                                       | 173 |
| XVI Religious Ceremonies . . . . .                              | 184 |
| XVII Sacrifices . . . . .                                       | 192 |
| XVIII Shrines . . . . .   | 195 |
| XIX Prohibitions . . . . .                                      | 197 |
| XX Kandu — Konko . . . . .                                      | 204 |
| XXI Appeasing Names for Animals and Animal Traditions . . . . . | 208 |
| XXII Kinkonko . . . . .   | 211 |
| XXIII Magic . . . . .   | 216 |
| XXIV The Magical Feats of the Bandoki . . . . .                 | 225 |
| XXV Tales about Bandoki . . . . .                               | 235 |
| XXVI Secret Societies . . . . .                                 | 244 |
| XXVII Good and Evil . . . . .                                   | 257 |



## PREFACE

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With the publication of this volume the major part of KARL LAMAN's ethnographical records from the Lower Congo has been made accessible to research. The fourth and final volume will be considerably less comprehensive and deal mainly with myths and tales.

LAMAN's technique of recording his information has made occasional repetitions unavoidable. In order to reduce their number to a minimum, the material of the present volume has undergone considerable rearrangement. LAMAN's own wording has been adopted whenever possible, which occasionally lends the phraseology an old-fashioned flavour, but it must be remembered that the original records were set down some fifty years ago. Moreover, the Swedish typescript of LAMAN's manuscript which has been at my disposal is almost twenty years old and was never subjected to a final revision by its author. Since it undeniably contained occasional inconsistencies, I have in the final instance always been guided by the original notes in Kikongo.

I am greatly indebted to Mr. EFRAIM ANDERSSON, fil. dr., for his help and the infinite pains he has taken with this work. An on the whole consistent use of the Kongo terms for such concepts as, for instance, nganga, ndoki, kandu and konko, has seemed advisable in order to avoid possible misunderstanding. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that LAMAN's dictionaries are an indispensable appendage to this volume. Individual references to these dictionaries have not been practicable, for one thing because LAMAN himself omitted them and it is LAMAN, not the editor, who must express himself in his own work.

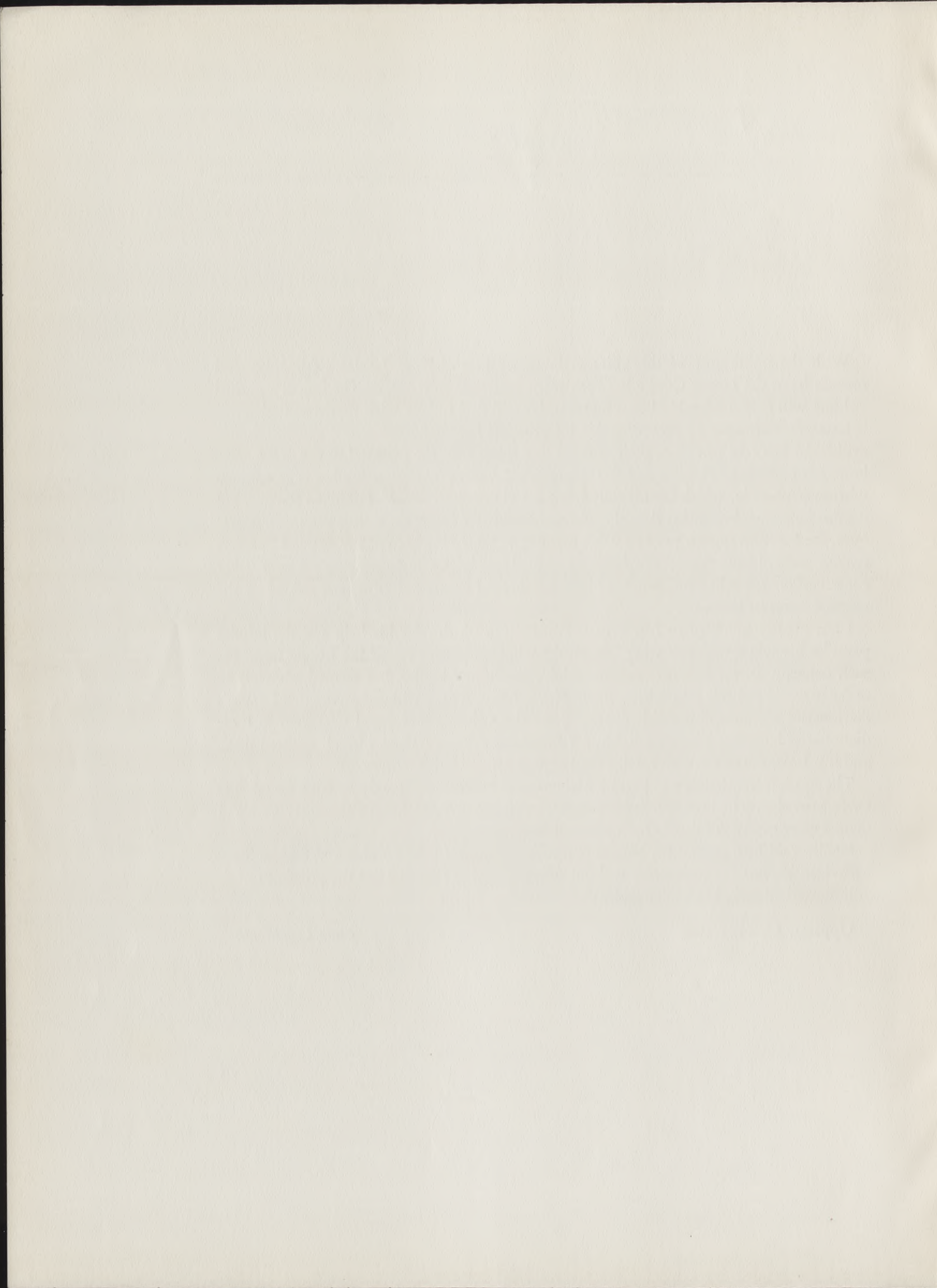
The English translation is in part by Mr. DONALD BURTON and partly by Mrs. CATHERINE G. SUNDSTRÖM. The illustrations have been entrusted to Mr. HARALD FAITH-ELL. To all of them I offer my warm thanks for a job well done.

Finally I wish to express my sincere gratitude to Humanistiska Fonden and Statens Samhällsvetenskapliga Forskningsråd, without whose generous financial aid the printing of this volume would have been impossible.

Uppsala, October 1962

*Sture Lagercrantz*





## Conceptions of the Soul

Man is considered a double being, made up of an outer and an inner entity. The outer body again consists of two parts, the shell (*vuvudi*) which is buried and rots in the ground as quickly as a mushroom, and the inner, invisible part (*mvumbi*) which is eaten by the magic of the *bandoki*, who are sometimes helped by *bankuyu* and *minkisi*.

The inner man or man proper (*ngudi a muntu*) is also attributed with two separate entities, for which the dialects have several names.

In the north, the expression *kivuumunu* (meaning breathing or the breathing or life-giving organ and derived from the verb *vuumuna*, to breathe, to live) is used alternatively with *muuumununu*, spirit or breath (attributed with a more personal nature as indicated by the prefix *mu*). Other expressions are *mwela* (breath), *kiini* (shadow), *mooyo* (life), *mpeeve* (spirit, wind), and *nsala* (soul, principle of life). *Kivuumunu* is the agent by which man breathes and lives. It is present throughout the body except in the hairs and nails; wherever *kivuumunu* is absent, there is no pain, no feeling. *Kivuumunu* is cherished and protected and hidden from the *bankisi* and *bandoki*. The proverb says: "Life is hidden in a *nkobe* box" meaning that if the box is closed, no one, not even Death, can find it.

*Mooyo* (life, belly) is different. Man contributes to it by taking food. Hence there are two types of life: one type by which life and breath is preserved (*vuumunu*), the second (*mooyo*) which is given food to gain strength to go on living. The second type is quick to renew its demand for food and it clamours when it is hungry (colic, etc.) The two have one thing in common; they contribute to man's continued existence through breath and nutrition.

Life comes from *Nzambi*, he gave it to man at the time of the Creation. The old people, however, were unable to explain this. About breathing they said: "Who the father, which the grandchild?" This was interpreted as being the *mvila*, for instance "Father *Nlaza*, *ntekolo Mazinga*".

The site of life is in the heart and all through the body, but the *nsala* and the shadow may dwell anywhere: in a house, in a pot or calabash or with a *nsimbi* in a rapid, mountain, or ravine. Such places are chosen by the dead to keep their *nsala* in, because when somebody dies, the *nsala* disappears first and only the shell (*vuvudi*) remains.

The life-breath (*kivuumunu*) is found through the entire body in its interior and near the heart.

Mwela is, as the prefix indicates, of a personal type. The same word with the prefix *ki* becomes *kyela* and means then limb, whereas *dyela* means sense. The word *mwela* is also used to denote flatulent colic passed by the anus. *Mwela* is the organ by which man breathes and lives.

If the *mwela* deserts the body, man dies. When somebody is ill the *bankuyu* are lurking to catch his *mwela*. If he dies, he becomes a *mukuyu*. As such he can enter a living person (i.e. the envy of the dead). The *mwela* can enter into any animal; thus if one of the parents of a newborn child wishes to *kemuna* it (use *banganga*), when the child is bathed in the *nsansulu* pot, he or she is to make a scratch (*binda*) on the body of the child and another one on that of the desired animal. The child's blood is smeared on the animal and vice versa. Thereby they share the same *mwela*, as what came from the child now belongs to the animal and vice versa. This technique may be used by a *nganga* to prolong his life. When such people die, their animal dies too. When the animal dies, on the other hand, its human partner can survive, provided that he immediately draws some blood from the animal's heart. An animal with a human soul does not fear its blood brother. The two can meet whenever they want to. If the animal becomes easily frightened, the body of its blood brother is ailing.

*Mwela* is life. It cannot leave man definitively until he is dead. *Mwela* leaves when man falls ill and the shadow wanders abroad. Because hard breathing makes the breast heave, the old people believed that the heart embodies life. *Mwela* is synonymous with *mpeeve* (wind, spirit), which can be snatched away by *bandoki*. When man is asleep, whether he is ill or in health, the *mwela* (spirit) may leave the body to wander abroad, just as someone leaves his house to go for a walk. Presently the *mwela* longs for its home and returns, just as someone returns to his house. It may wander in the woods or in the villages. If it travels evil roads, in the land of the dead, in ravines or waterfalls, where the *minkisi* and *basimbi* dwell, it falls ill. It may also be caught by *bandoki* or *bankuyu* and then man becomes ill and dies. A *mwela* wanders about in order to collect knowledge about coming events for its body or its *nsala*. The *mwela* and the *nsala* are sometimes considered identical, others talk of the *mwela* of the shadow. When somebody is asleep, it leaves the body to wander around or to do its work. A roaming *mwela* enters the body while man is soundly asleep. The *mwela* of an evil person enters someone else to torment him and make him ill.

The *mpeeve* is also said to leave the body, by night or by day, when man is dreaming. The *mpeeve* may be caught and hit and feel pain.

The *kivuumunu* can be returned by quietening a person's heart if he has had an outburst of fury or by taking a person down to the water to be refreshed if he has been exhausted by strong sunshine. The latter treatment is also resorted to in cases of fainting and apparent death. It is the *minkuyu* who restore life. If a deceased returns to snatch away someone's *kivuumunu*, *nkisi Nkondi* is invoked against the dead, who are forced to return the *vuumunu*.

When someone dies, the *kivuumunu* or the *mwela* goes to the land of the dead, whereas the shadow is fetched by the *bankuyu*. The arrival of a new *kivuumunu* or *mwela* often starts disputes among the dead, as some of them may want the newcomer to stay on earth

to look after the orphans. Someone who returns to life after apparent death may relate what he has heard and name those he has seen. In that case the nganga must first give him permission to relate (teeta) by splitting a luteete kernel, otherwise the narrator would pay with his life for revealing that he has seen the dead. But some of those that return never relate their experiences.

Man's kiini (shadow) is a separate entity, and so is the shadow of death. The latter is the one fetched by the dead, who are the keepers of man's shadow. It is up to the dead to decide whether one recovers or dies. Man cannot remove his own shadow; this is the work of the dead. The body (nitu) is buried, the kiini body is eaten by bandoki while the vumunu body or life disappears into the woods and becomes a nkuyu. Actually, the kiini body is mvumbi, the inside of the body which is consumed at death.

The shadow permeates the whole of man when it is unimpaired. It may leave the body, however. If the shadow disappears, the nganga must try to find it. When someone is ill, the nganga pours water into a dish, rubs himself and the patient with chalk and places the water opposite the latter to find out if his shadow can be seen. If the shadow is not clearly visible, the nganga says to the people: "Prepare the shrouds, for the shadow has been removed by the bandoki and bankuyu". Then the people call upon the nganga of Nkondi to invoke nkisi Nkondi to bring back the shadow. The one who stole the shadow may fear to be killed by Nkondi, so that he returns the shadow.

The banganga also look for shadows in the water, when warriors are selected for battle. Those whose shadows are not clearly visible, must remain at home. Other signs indicating a warrior's unsuitability for battle may be stubbing his toe against an obstacle, a bee buzzing around his ear, or an odour of blood emanating from him.

Photography was regarded as an odious practice, as people's shadows were taken and removed overseas. Hence the photo of a dead person causes grief.

In some places, it is forbidden to walk on the shadow someone else casts on the ground. Boys sometimes play at walking on each other's shadow. If a boy is unwilling to join in the game, he hides his shadow in a bigger shadow, for instance that of a house, and spits.

Man's shadow may even wander about in his waking hours. People may see someone's wraith pass by, but then he must say: "No, it was not I who passed. Perhaps you saw my shadow".

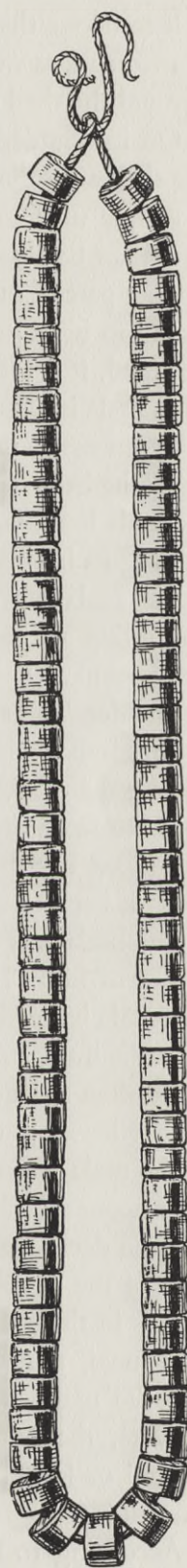


Fig. 1. Necklace, Nzabi in Masendjo (Laman 132).

If someone thinks of another locality, his shadow does too and arrives there before him. If a woman, at work in a plantation, thinks of her home, her shadow will arrive there before her and the shell (vuvudi) follows later.

On its wanderings, the shadow experiences whatever happens to the body and advises the shell accordingly.

People used to be afraid of looking into water or in mirrors in the belief that death could not be far off, once they had seen their invisible shadow.

That part of man which is not visible on the outside of the body, is called the nsala. The nsala too is a sort of vuumunu, a living being. In northern parts, where the word nsala is not used, it is identical with the invisible kiini (shadow). In Mayombe and other southern parts nsala is equal to lunzi, ndunzi (sense). In many other places there is no clear distinction between nsala, mwela, and vuumunu.

To the banganga the nsala is visible in the shape of the kiini. Just as the body has its kiini, the nsala has one all its own. The mwela of the nsala is said to wander during sleep, transmitting its impressions to the nsala that in its turn informs man in his dreams.

The nsala is everywhere in the body, and the nsala of the sick is said to be vesuka (i.e. crumbling at the edges). This is compared to the decline of the moon, which is also said to be vesuka. The nsala does not leave the body until man is fatally ill and the kiini begins to wander. The nsala is kept by the dead in virtual captivity, remaining inactive; the reason for this is that otherwise any illness would at once end fatally. The nsala seeks out its guardian among the dead, and therefore man looks for it among his dead relatives. When the dead come to fetch the nsala, it goes to their country or to some other place. It can be hidden any place, even among the bandoki. It is the duty of the banganga to find the nsala and bring it back to the patient by the power of the storm.

The nsala acts as man's diviner, as it wanders about like the mwela and predicts man's future to him. The nsala always returns from its wanderings to the body of its owner. The nsala has varied experiences, some good and some evil. If it falls into a pit or is pursued by an animal, its owner realizes that he will soon go to the land of the dead. The nsala must often endure many other hardships on its wanderings. It may get involved in disputes with others and even be knocked about. If the argument concerns the living, the owner of the nsala will recover, should he be ailing, but if it concerns the dead, he will soon die. If someone is seriously ill, his nsala is said to be worn down, part of it is gone and it looks like the declining moon. This idea does not prevail in the north about the shadow (kiini). Part of the mwela (breath) experiences pain, while another part of it breathes easy. The pain is in the part that is on the wane, while relief prevails in the part that is unimpaired. The lunzi, ndunzi is believed to embody life. If the lunzi disappears, man falls ill and, like the nsala, it must be found and brought back by the banganga. The ndunzi is, as it were, the image of the face in the inner man, whose body is formed by the vumi, vuvudi or kyutu that can be eaten by the bandoki. This body has life. If this disappears, man dies.

According to the nsala concept, the lunzi is considered part of the nsala. If someone

becomes feeble-minded, his nsala-kilunzi has vesuka (worn down), i.e. the kilunzi part has broken away.

Life enters the foetus by the breathing of the mother which transmits kivuumunu to the foetus too. When the foetus has reached full term, it also receives a life of its own to breathe with. Thus the foetus has mwela and is able to breathe at its birth. That which originates the foetus comes from the loins of the father. When husband and wife copulate, the seed moves to the place of gestation and becomes mazenge-zenge (small vesicles or cells). After turning into blood, it first spreads through the body and then collects in the organ that brings forth the foetus. The woman has now received the origin to her child. At this stage, she is not so strong, as the foetal blood is still wandering about in her body before settling and becoming flesh (foetus). Once this has been achieved, the mother regains her strength and can resume her work. Since the foetus has life, both mwela and nsala, it can be cured if it should become ill. If an abortion is feared, nkisi Funza, nkisi Kilonda, or nkisi Mutinu may be approached. The foetus has dreams, and its nsala wanders about in the usual way.

Five to six months after its conception, the foetus starts moving and kicking. If this fails to happen, the mother becomes worried for fear that her pregnancy may not be normal. This condition requires treatment.

Whereas a child's origin does not involve the mwela or nkisi or any similar force of a dead father, its ancestors may delay delivery if the wife or her kanda have failed to fulfil their promises or to make the gifts due to the ancestors. The wife's relatives then visit the grave of the ancestors to ask for mercy, making sacrifices and rubbing the woman with soil from the grave. A child may resemble its dead father or some other member of the family, as the proverb says: "The blood of the family can not be stolen".

If the mother has committed adultery without confessing to her husband, she is unable to give birth to the child. Should the child be born anyway, it will die.

The old banganga believe that they receive their mwela from Nzambi, although some claim that it was given them by Bunzi or Funza.

The old people claimed that the mwela of animals does not change into an animal or into any other shape, but dies completely. Nor does it, like the human mwela, travel to the land of the dead. Such animals as exist in the land of the dead, are created there to provide game. There are those who believe that these animals went there after being killed on earth. If a hunting dog is left behind on earth, it may be fetched by the hunter.

Certain animals are considered to belong to the kanda or mvila and hence its members will not kill such a patron, like the leopard, for instance. The Kinanga honour the nkumbi rodent as the guardian animal of their kanda. It is not eaten by free-born members of the kanda. If they were to point a finger at the nkumbi, the finger would become infected with ringworm and if they were to touch the animal, their entire body would be thus afflicted.

The Kinkanga pay respect to the guinea hen (nkanga) as the bird of their kanda. If the free-born Kinkanga eat or touch a guinea hen, they are afflicted with scabies and become as bald as the fowl.

Other animals are prohibited because of *minkisi*, seeing that they have a part in the manufacture of these *minkisi* or in treatments involving them. Some animals, such as the *baminzi* (prairie dogs) inspire a superstitious fear because of their cunning in escaping the hunters and the fact that *bandoki* hide their *mwela* in them. If such an animal allows itself to be shot, it means that its *mwela* is on the wane.

Trees have a *mwela* or *kivuumunu*, and a heart (the marrow) inside. A dead tree is bereft of its *mwela* and bears no fruit. Just as people and animals each have their special type of life, so the trees have theirs. The life of a plant is concentrated in its roots, for if a plant is cut off, new shoots appear. The seat of life has not been destroyed.

Some plants have peculiar properties and are used as *bilongo* (medicine) in the manufacture of *minkisi* and in healing the sick. Certain types of soil and stones are used for the same purpose. The soil furthermore produces crops.

The fire and the prairie fire have no *mwela*, they are like a dull knife. But if the knife becomes sharp and pointed it can wound and destroy. The fire must be properly watched, as it is dangerous to children and old people.

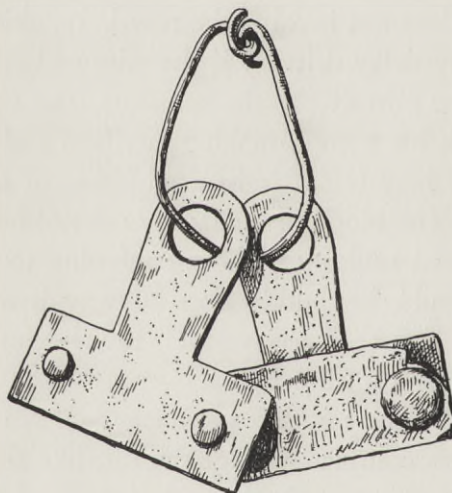


Fig. 2. Chest- or forehead-ornament (*mumbumbu*), *Wumbu* in *Masendjo* (*Laman 42*).

## CHAPTER II

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### Sleep and Dreams

Because of its similarity to death, sleep is called the brother of death. It is invigorating and wholesome.

Sleep is deep when even a fight outside the house fails to wake the sleeper. If the sleep is easily disturbed, it is called nsesi sleep. A boy should be trained to sleep lightly. If a boy is a heavy sleeper, the old people say: "We have a girl instead of a boy". A boy who sleeps lightly grows up to be wise and ready to meet danger or to come to the rescue.

If an elderly person sleeps very heavily, he is regarded as a ndoki who goes abroad to eat people. The shell of the body remains, while the kindoki soul roams about.

A dream resembles a diviner who relates future events. During sleep, when man is dreaming, the inner man roams about to investigate. Man is made up of two different entities, a visible one (the body) and an invisible one (mpeve). When the body is awake, the mpeve sleeps and vice versa. By day man works, eats, drinks, conducts law suits, etc. Then the body is active. At nightfall the body falls asleep, and the invisible, spiritual man becomes active. Thus the two entities complement each other.

Dreams are derived from the things man does, hears or thinks, and that the heart has hidden. When man sleeps, ntu a tulu (sleep, the head of dreams) makes dreams from them. If man's deeds and thoughts are vicious or evil, his head spins round and round by the fire and the head of sleep cannot recover it. It is as if consumed by the fire.

A dream is but a dream and contains no magic, although it may reveal secrets. The old people used to say: "The invisible man dwelling in the body is the active one in man's dreams, when he is asleep. It is he who goes to the land of the dead. Sometimes the dreams are forgotten. But if a dream is significant, then "the head (dream) shows it", according to the old people, who said: "In the head of sleep (ntu a tulu), or dream, I have seen So-and-so do this or that. The head has seen it and shown it to the two men of my body". What is observed by the first, the dream shows to the second and vice versa. On awakening, the body sees everything clearly and realizes the meaning of the dream.

Dreams also reveal the tricks of bandoki and minkisi. Thus one may dream of being harassed by the dead or by bandoki. Someone who is beset by nightmares must shake his rattle and invoke, sing and shout all night long, reviling and criticizing the looks of his tormentor in the dream. Whoever fits the description is accused of causing the nightmare.



If somebody is repeatedly troubled by bad dreams he is to put leaves of the *minkula nkabi* or the *minkula ndozi* herb under his pillow. If this brings no relief, a *nganga manga* (diviner) should be approached to smell out what *nkisi* is leading the dreamer's *mpeve* onto evil ways. The dreamer is then treated by the *nganga* of that *nkisi*, but if this still brings no alleviation, another *nkisi* is consulted. Or, alternatively, the dreamer must chant invocations all night long, to the accompaniment of his rattle, singing: "Eh, mother Maluta will pass with her broken-down *mpidi* basket. Eh, mother Maluta will pass along the edge with her broken-down *mpidi* basket" (i.e. the basket in which the *bandoki* carry the human flesh for their nightly feasts). If the tormentor is a male *ndoki*, the *mpidi* basket is replaced by a *ntete* basket or a food-bag in the song. Some people believe that the *bandoki* sell their victims to the end of the world, as they are never seen again.

If the bad dreams persist, a fowl is sacrificed to a *nkisi* amidst incantations and, finally, the nightmare apparition is named, in the hope that he will be ashamed and desist from further tricks, for fear that he will otherwise be given *nkasa*.

On awakening, one may sometimes hear a voice say a few words or see something flitting by.

If the apparition is one of the dead, it must be kept a secret. The dead are preceded by a whisper of wind rustling the leaves. Anyone laying claim to a vision of a dead person unheralded by this rustle, will hardly be believed.

Sometimes someone's wraith is seen ahead of his actual arrival. To have a vision of a wraith is dangerous, because it predicts some illness that may be fatal, unless the *nganga* recovers the *nsala*.

The *mpeve* can inform man of the activities of someone living far away, if it meets the other's *mpeve*. On meeting, the two spirits make friends and the wandering *mpeve* is closely informed about the doings of the other, so that they will be able to assist each other. Thus, on awakening, someone may say: "I have dreamt about So-and-so, he was doing this and he said that".

Sleep occurs when the pupil (*mwana diilu*) turns inwards or rests; then the death of sleep sets in, as ordained by *Nzambi*. Sleep and death are derived from the same source.

The *mwela* present in man collects in *Mr Ear* (*mfumu a kutu*), i.e. the *mwela* of the body is called *Mr Ear*. He crawls in and out, as it were. When he has left, man is unable to straighten up. In the evening, *Mr Ear* enters and leaves three times, directing man to sleep. Then he stays outside to watch over the sleeper. If the *mwela* is devoid of *kundu* glands, it wanders about playing with its blind fellows (that lack *kundu*). On the other hand, if it has *kundu*, it is intent on catching another spirit to nourish its *kundu*, as it has become addicted to human flesh.

In the south, the master in the ear is called *ngudi a kutu* (actually the inner ear). It is regarded as a person. The ear wax is known as the excrements of the master in the ear. The master in the ear is the chief (head), who preserves the life-breath. When life is finished, the master in the ear leaves. On the other hand, he may remain, even if the *nsala kilunzi* (the soul, being of reason) is withdrawn, i.e. when someone is feeble-minded. When someone

dies, the master in the ear becomes a kinyumba (spirit of the departed generally). If the deceased was a ndoki, the master in the ear becomes a nkuyu spirit. Mfumu a kutu has a body transparent as a window pane. By day, mfumu a kutu announces its presence by vibrations and shrieks in one's ear, indicating that one is being discussed. Then one must at once whistle and snap one's fingers by one's ear, saying: "I hear". In subsequent dreams everything will be clearly audible to intelligent ears. If the vibrations are felt in the right ear, the gossip is a man, if in the left ear, it is a woman.

It is said that mfumu a kutu is like a man with two eyes, one good and one weak. When the bandoki wish to harm somebody, they cover his good eye (reason) to keep him from seeing what happens. His nsala declines and he falls ill, until the banganga heal him and he is able to see clearly with his good eye. A real dream is superior to dream fancies. A real dream is worth relating, to see if it comes true. Evil is rewarded by bad dreams, good by pleasant dreams. Sleep-walkers are called dream-walkers (nkwa lotolo). A sleep-walking man may go and tap palm-wine and store it in the house, but on awakening he will be unable to explain its presence. If he is married, his wife will tell him that he himself did it. Sometimes the sleep-walker rises to sit by the fire and warm himself without waking from his sleep. A sleep-walking woman, again, may fetch water into the house. After taking her calabashes or pots from the mpidi basket, she returns to bed. In the morning she is highly surprised. At other times she may sweep the floor or the ground outside the house.

If somebody dreams that ripe (red) palm nuts cover the ground, he will experience great happiness. It is a good dream and means that he will receive many gifts. To dream of ripe maize is also a good omen. Wherever he looks, the dreamer beholds ripe yellowish-red maize. The same applies to dreams of fresh beans and peanuts.

If somebody dreams that he is out hunting, and has wounded an animal but cannot recover it, although he finds a trail of blood, this is an omen that he will soon shoot an animal if he goes hunting. Success in hunting is also indicated by dreams showing somebody who is badly hurt, with blood gushing from his wounds.

If somebody dreams of salt covering the ground as far as the eye reaches, he will receive gifts.

If somebody dreams that he examines his fishing bucks but finds no fish in them, he will find them full of fish the following morning. If, on the other hand, he finds a buck full of fish in his dream, it will be empty in the morning, since he has emptied it in his dream.

To dream of being pursued by a dangerous animal, and, after falling into a pit, being caught by it, is a bad omen indicating that a ndoki torments the sleeper in the guise of the animal.

Dreams involving grave-digging, carrying a corpse or lamenting are greatly feared as they predict death within the kanda.

If somebody dreams of being pursued and bitten by driver ants, it means that his limbs will start aching and become covered with wounds.

Dreams involving water-crossings by ferry, fording, or swimming, or sinking in the water, predict illness and pains in the lumbar region. If the dream persists, the illness remains in the body.

If somebody dreams that the road he walks suddenly ends, with sharp shoots of grass sprouting up all around for him to step on "dwe-dwe" (piercing), he may be bitten by a snake, a scorpion or a big spider.

If, in a dream, wasps incessantly sting somebody entering a wood, this predicts a headache in the near future.

If somebody dreams that he finds the road covered with excrements and keeps stepping into them, this tells him that he will be seriously ill within a few days.

Being tied up tightly by the dead in a dream predicts a possibly fatal illness. On awakening from such a dream, people often fall into a frenzy of weeping at the thought of leaving this world so soon. Any dream about being bound implies that the dreamer will soon be wound in shrouds.

To dream several nights in succession of trying to quench a prairie fire by trampling it, means that soon heavy wounds will be covering the body. Eating yuma in a dream warns against something poisonous that will cause the stomach to be swollen for a considerable period, if not until death. Somebody may wake up from dreaming that he is picking nsafu fruits and then, on falling asleep again, dream that he looks for a hook to pull down the fruit, finds it and climbs the tree, picks the nsafu fruits and maybe toasts them in the fire. This dream warns of scabies that will cover the entire body. Someone who dreams of digging a grave in the company of others and smoothing its sides, without knowing who is to be buried, will himself be laid in the grave.

Someone who dreams of having his walk interrupted by falling into a pit, possibly a pitfall and being trapped in it, will catch a fatal disease, as falling into a pit in a dream is synonymous with being buried in a grave.

To dream of people spreading out a cloth and sitting about in meditation, a hand under their chin, predicts an impending demise, as the cloth is intended for a shroud.

Other dreams may reveal that a nkisi is at work. One informant relates:

"I dreamt that I saw a lot of dead pigs with fat that dissolved like water. People had gathered to get themselves a pig and so had I. Then I saw my dead brother approaching on a swollen leg. He said: "Be careful, don't touch it, for look, I, your dead brother, touched a pig and my leg swelled". On awakening I touched my leg; it felt heavy and began to hurt".

To dream of dead pigs and a dead relative is a manifestation of nkisi Bunzi. The patient is to be treated by Bunzi and is forbidden to eat pork.

Another relates: "During the first hour of sleep, I was stamping about. I saw the women NSIMBA and MALENGE and the men BULU and MPUNZA carrying a corpse and sweating profusely. I asked: "Whom are you carrying?" "You who ask, what is your name?" "I? NKENGE (=the boaster) is my name". BULU: "Let us take him. He boasts too much". The other one: "Let him go". BULU persisted, however. He ran after me. I ran into the house and hid under the blanket. He produced a razor and was going to whet it. That was when I awoke, my body trembling from the chase, with him stretching out his owl claws towards me".

Someone who appears in a dream carrying a corpse, only to deposit it in order to pursue

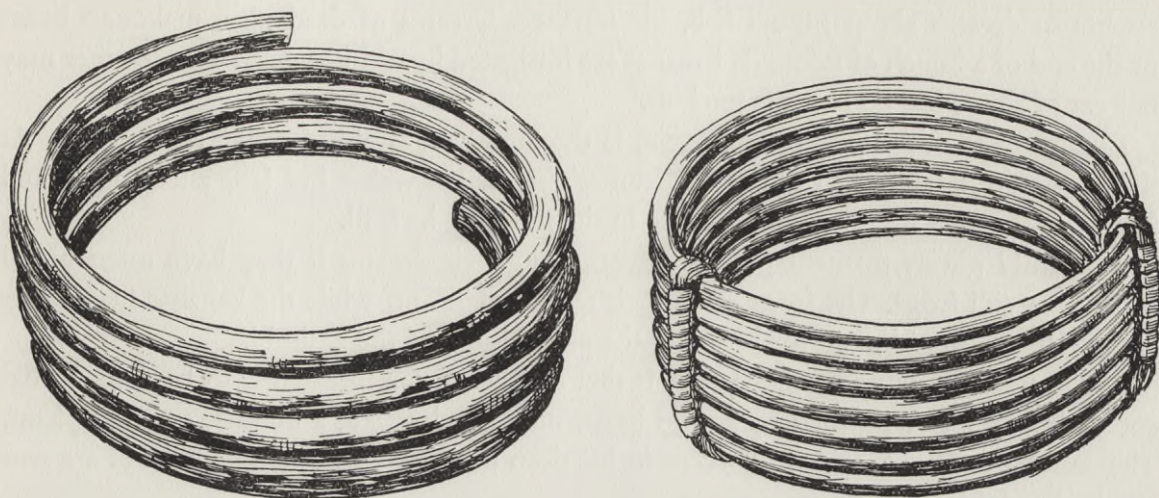


Fig. 3. A, Armlet of brass, Sangi in Masendjo (Laman 60). B, Foot-ring, Ladi in Kolo (Laman 413).

the dreamer, flourishing a razor, is thus revealed as a cruel ndoki who pursues the deaf mutes (the innocent). If only one ndoki pursues the dreamer, there is no immediate risk of being eaten, because, as in the present case, the others are still discussing whether he should be left alone or eaten.

A third dream may be related:

"As I was walking towards the village, I saw a child, grey all over with ashes, take the cloth covering me in the rear and put it on the fire, where it was consumed. Then the child took my front cloth and put it into the fire, where it was consumed. When I looked, I saw a whole house catch fire. We took young banana trees to beat out the fire. I wept and wept, but the house burnt down". A dream of loincloths and houses being consumed by fire is sent by nkisi Nkondi, when nails are driven into his body. Nkondi announces in this way that if the culprit has a child, it will be taken away and eaten by Nkondi. If the life of the child is to be spared, a fine must be paid to have the nails removed. Each nkisi has its own dream to reveal how the sick are to be treated and what prohibitions obtain. Dreams sent by nkisi Nkondi deal with prairie fires or other fires, with roasted palm-nuts or manioc. By means of the fire that all these dreams deal with, Nkondi inspires the guilty with fear.

If a pregnant woman dreams of a crooked staff or anything else that is crooked, it is nkisi Kongo making his presence felt, announcing that his treatment should be given to the woman.

To meet a live being with a putrescent appearance in a dream, means that treatment by nkisi Mbola is required.

Dreams of being insane come from Nakongo or Nyambi. Dreams of dying mean that neither the dead nor the living love the dreamer.

Dreams of nsafu fruits mean that nkisi Londa has caused the dreamer's wife to become pregnant. From then on, she is not allowed to eat nsafu, for fear of an abortion. The same

applies to dreams about mpudi fish, for instance. Dreams of dead pigs, makongo beans or the end of a bunch of ndongila bananas are instigated by nkisi Mayiza. The dreamer may not eat of these, lest he become unclean.

Dreams of the dead inspire great awe, as the Sundi are afraid of seeing dead people. At times, the dead are felt to grab the dreamer's arms. He wakes but falls asleep again and feels how they cut his body with knives. In the morning he is ill.

The simbi ghosts torment pregnant women in their dreams if they have eaten bimbi bananas or sidi frogs. The frogs cause their teeth to fall out, while the bananas make their legs swell, as a punishment for breaking the prohibitions of the basimbi.

Nightmares occur when the sleeper is tied and beaten or threatened to have his throat cut with a knife, or pursued by a wild beast, such as a leopard, a buffalo, or an elephant. The sufferer calls out, cries and weeps in his sleep until woken. Such nightmares are sent by the bandoki.

The natives attribute great importance to their dreams and spend considerable time pondering over them, wondering whether they will come true or not. When the moon is new, dreams are not so comprehensible. A few examples follow:

"I was sleeping nawoo (deeply) and dreamt that I was walking through a valley, when rain came pouring down on me from a clear blue sky. I awoke with a start and complained to my family. Presently the first rain fell on me."

"I was asleep and dreamt that MAFUMBA had killed a horse antelope (nsungu) and brought me meat. After dreaming this, I met him and told him: "Go and track game without a dog". He did so. Almost at once he came upon a horse antelope, fired and felled it (y-i-i) with the first shot. He cut it up and its "heart" was given to me."

A man dreamt that he was not to marry the lady of his choice. His master had died leaving several widows as part of his estate. In his sleep, the man heard the deceased say: "Leave that woman alone. Marry this one instead, for the woman of your choice is your sister, she is free-born and belongs to your own kanda". Hence the dreamer did not marry her.

A man dreamt that he and his wife were fighting with his mother. When he related the dream to his wife, she said: "That dream will come true". He: "Ha ha!" The wife: "How do you know, my husband that it is only a dream?" She said no more. The next morning, the husband was taking peanuts to the market in a ntete basket. Arriving at the Congo, he saw his mother taking a bath. The ferryman called to them to put their ntete baskets aboard. When the man came up to him, the ferryman asked: "How are things with you?" He: "How, indeed?" The ferryman: "Here, take your ntete basket. Go back and inform your relatives!" On his way back, he met a mboma snake. The mboma took the basket and the man fled. Returning to the village, he related what he had seen. The next day he died and his mother, forced to eat nkasa, died too.

A man was sleeping heavily as his dead chief appeared to him and said: "We are grieved that you are so poor, but we will put some goods beyond the inner door. I command you, however, not to tell this to anybody. If you do, you will regret it". On awakening, he

found goods piled in heaps and was greatly rejoiced. But he said nothing. He called himself MATOOTA MBONGO (he who finds property). People were amazed at his fine possessions and asked him where he got them. He answered: "Where, indeed?" One day, however, he drank too much palm-wine and, hearing the others relate how the dead sometimes gave away their property, he said: "Indeed, what you have seen in my house, my dead chief gave me".

That night when he was asleep, his chief appeared to him again and berated him over his behaviour, saying that now all his property would disappear. When he woke up in the morning, the man looked, but there was nothing left, not even a strip of cloth to tie round his head.

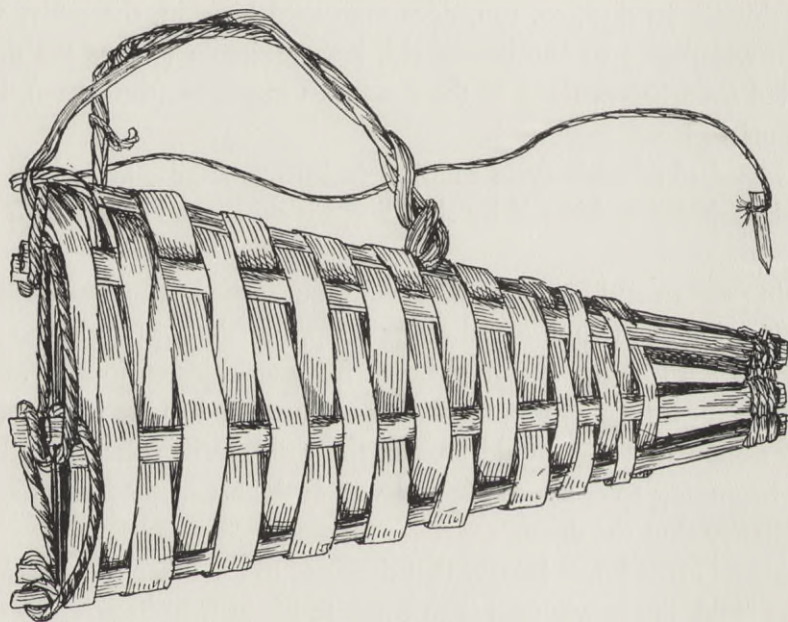


Fig. 4. Rattrap (*saka*), *Sundi* in Mukimbungu (*Laman 603*).

## The Next Life

As the snake sloughs its skin, so, too, does man shed his skin, the body, when he dies, and the spirit (mwela) goes to another world, kutwa zingila (where we shall live). The place is also called nsi a bafwa (land of the dead), ku mpemba (the grave), ku mfinda (in the forest, the burial place).

One who has died plucks life (vela mooyo) in kutwa zingila, i.e. where he is to live. Man's capacity to rejuvenate himself by shedding his skin was lost through a disobedient wife.

In the beginning a man and his wife had a child, but it died. The man then told his wife to lay it in the interior of the house and cover it up, but she was under no circumstances to look at the child until he had returned home from a projected journey.

Then one day she heard something beginning to rustle and move from the inner room, and she got the notion that she should look at the child. When she opened the door she saw that it was beginning to come to life and was in the act of shedding its skin. She was glad and immediately shut the door.

When her husband came home he saw that the door to the inner room had been opened. He looked at the child, but it was unable to come to life as it had started to do. It died for ever. The father became indignant and said: "You, my wife, are a disobedient being. See, the child had begun to change its skin, but because you looked at it the changing of skin failed. Now we shall die and go to another land to be transformed. Here on earth we cannot do so."

The land of the dead, where life continues, is in general called ku mpemba. Where they are buried is the village of the dead, where they live an ordinary village life like that on earth. It is a land of gladness and comfort, for the sickness and suffering of earth are now ended. One does not die any more. Death is like a reward. They say: "The nsala of the head springs away with the spirit (mwela)". Of a person who has died there are three parts, viz., the part which is eaten by bandoki, the part that is transformed to nkuyu, and the part that remains in the grave, i.e. pupu, shed skin. The actual person has long since gone away.

Those who are about to die often see a great host coming to meet them with dancing and gladness. They see brothers and sisters. Some are preparing food to meet the one who is coming.

But sometimes the deceased have disputes as to who is to die. Some are of the opinion that such and such a one must wait for a while on earth to look after orphans. If this person lives, then he has only been in a state of suspended animation. Then he tells of all he has heard and seen.

That man should arise from the dead was not conceived by the men of old. But in the land of the dead man's body, voice and appearance are changed. There they will live for ever, until, as many think, they become timelessly ancient and merge into bisimbi, kanyaya-grass, termite stacks etc. Others of the dead are said to be short of stature and to have much hair, which is reddish in colour and reaches to their shoulders. Others again are ashen grey and drab in appearance. Every country and people has its own appearance, in life as in the land of the dead.

Persons who have had great wounds and have been very sickly or maimed leave all their infirmities on earth with the covering they have shed (the body), unless they have died a horrible, evil death. One who has died a so-called good death becomes a good member, who is received with pure gladness.

If a person has been killed by an animal or devoured, there is no difference between him and one who has died a natural death, if he has been a good human being. The same holds true for one who has drowned or died through some other accident.

The land of the dead is the vicinity of burial places. The grave is the home of the deceased. They remain in their graves for six to eight, indeed, even ten, months. Here they change their skins and acquire a fair appearance like albinos. Here they get strength, so that they are soon able to go their way. This is seen when the grave collapses or an opening is observed. In many cases these deceased persons have been bandoki, and then they wander about in the palm groves, the woods and the villages to torment people at night-time and steal hens from the hen-house. Other bandoki are out to tap palm wine and cultivate their fields.

The good may also visit the villages to see how their survivors are looking after their children and possessions, and to assure themselves that these duties are being performed in accordance with what is right and proper. If this is not being done the deceased will be revenged.

The wicked and deceased bandoki may be awakened by bandoki on earth to come and do their evil deeds among the people. When banganga siba or koma nloko (invoke nkisi or place themselves under his protection) they call the land nsi a singi (the far off country) or nsi a mpandu (the magic land). The old conceive the land of the dead to be in kalunga (in the womb of the earth, straight down), which is flat and even like the earth, with mountains, water, woods and so forth. They also see a sky, as we do on earth, but this is another sky, for they have another earth, over which is the firmament with its stars, sun and moon.

Others say that the land of the dead is quite close to the village or away on the moors, so that the invisible ones are able to mix with the living in their work and on the caravan routes. At night one can hear the dead dancing, and so on.

Those who are in the woods have clean swept floors, and they are like migratory ants. The journey to the land of the dead takes the form of the ascent of a high mountain.



When the traveller has reached the top he is dead, and can no longer see his village. The sick person gives up the ghost (*tabuka wuumunu*) when he climbs up the mountain of death. He does not climb with his legs, for in the figurative sense we die as if we went quietly to sleep.

Those who have died previously come and fetch the deceased and show him the way, so that he will come to the right village, to his own people. This is what the sick have said, and they have died just afterwards. The deceased are overjoyed when their brother, sister or other relative arrives.

The new arrivals are questioned concerning their deeds by those who meet them. If anyone does not acknowledge everything he is not well received and is persecuted everywhere he goes, so that finally he has no place of abode. Thus some return to their village to frighten and torment those living there. But if such a person repents and confesses, they can receive him again in the land of the dead.

The deceased are also questioned, so that the newcomer may know whence they have come, to which *kanda* they belonged, and whether they know which persons have departed before them. If they are able to tell this, the deceased have come to their own *kanda*, which receives them; otherwise they are sent on to their own *kanda*.

The newcomers to the land of the dead are much questioned concerning the happenings in their village on earth. For instance: "I left So-and-so with the little child, it has probably begun to walk by now?" He answers: "Maama, how should I know?" — "But the one I left has perhaps got married now?" Answer: "Maama, how should I know?" For no-one wants to divulge anything from the land of the living.

The inhabitants in the land of the dead are as a rule divided into two main groups, *bankuyu* and *binyumba*. They are also given other names, such as *kiwila*, *wumfu*, *kimfwetete* (properly, a poisonous ant), *bikooyi* and *kyafwa*, which actually implies "These without country and without peace among humans". The names designate *bankuyu*, which may enter into human beings and be caught by *banganga*. *Nyungu* refers to a spectre, a vision, *kiniumvi* (*kiniumbi*) *kya nsitu*, wood-nymph. These smell so nasty that they wander about together with the dead. *Bankuyu* are those who have been *bandoki*. The meaning of *bankuyu* is "evil smell"; they have a horribly nasty body odour and smell like black *mfikini*-flies or like stink-horns. According to another version, the name means "change" or "transformation". For the *bankuyu* have not been given any definite place of abode in the land of the dead, but wander about on the mountains, the plains and in the woods. They also enter the villages to frighten the people, and they may even steal hens there.

Anyone who meets a *nkuyu* covers his face with his hands, so that no-one will recognize him. They are short of stature, for they were cut in two when they were cut up.

In the north a *nkuyu* may be a *ndoki* or not. The sculptures that protect their owners are here also referred to as *nkuyu*.

*Binyumba* are those who have been without *kindoki* on earth. They have the same kind of bodies as on earth, for they committed no evil deeds in the land of the dead. They have different occupations and conduct lawsuits and so forth.

Binyumba may enter a person's body and stay in the village, for they can surprise one like the ngondo-monkey. Binyumba are tall, well dressed and adorned. Bandoki on the moors, again, have ragged apparel and their houses consist of tussock they have collected.

One who has been a man of peace here on nseke a mpanga remains a man of peace in the world of the dead, a quarrelsome person remains quarrelsome, a wag remains a wag and a thievish knave likewise a thievish knave etc. A man who has been rich on earth is also rich in the land of the dead, and a poor man remains poor, and so on.

The dead always enjoy good health. No-one has ever heard of anyone being sick in nsi a bafwa. Those who have eaten pepper may become visible in another land, for on journeys it happens that someone may see and recognize him in a village.

One who dies as an old man remains old as regards his body. The good will remain good and the wicked wicked. The reason why they are as they used to be on nseke a mpanga is that they shall not think of that land and long to return to it, or mourn that they should have left it. It is also due to the fact that they shed their skins for new skins when they die, and thus remain the same. The shadow goes thither; it shows the appearance of the body.

Everything that exists on nseke a mpanga exists also in nsi a vinda (the far off land). If anyone does not feel at home there he returns to nseke a mpanga. There is, however, this difference: that no-one inhabiting nsi a vinda may eat pepper. They may not add pepper when they cook yuma. If anyone should eat pepper he returns to the earth and becomes visible to the living. But this they do not want, for it would only cause sorrow to see, for instance, one's children or others being tormented and faring badly.

When a rich person dies he is shrouded in a lot of possessions. These he is to take with him, and for them he is again to marry many wives in the land of the dead. In these marriages they also have children, eat and drink as they did during their lives on the earth. The old people knew that they had married and had children that were born in nsi a bafwa, for they had no children when they died.

Those sojourning in nsi a vinda live for a very, very long time. When they grow weak from age they shed their skins, are rejuvenated and become sturdy and strong. When in the sequel they have lived, eaten, become ancient and feeble, they shed their skins again. When they have shed their skins five or six times they are transformed into simbi-beings, that live in the water, especially rapids.

Others think: "Now I have had enough of the life here. Others may see to my kanda. I shall go the way of the nganga and help them in the village by being admitted as nkisi." He then sends a nganga a dream to the effect that he wants to be received to help them to cure diseases.

A deceased person may show himself in any country at all. On journeys to Matadi and the coast the bearers may see someone who has lived in their village. The old people thought that such deceased persons accompanied them on the journey to protect the travellers against evil spirits etc. Some consider that they are persons who have eaten pepper in the land of the dead. Such an individual comes to life again, but he goes to a country where no-one will recognize him. He is called munyukulu (whom one is not accustomed to have

intercourse with), for no-one knows whence he has come. If he has eaten pepper already in the grave, he dies again and is changed to a water-nkisi to be taken up by the people. When such a being shows itself it shows itself with the body and the spirit (mwela) it had when in life.

But a deceased person who has been a good man while on earth may show himself with power if, for example, he has left children behind and they are not getting the food and care they need. The deceased may then throw stones at the house and manifest himself in different ways, so that the people in question must obey him and give the children proper care.

The deceased may manifest themselves in the same way and still more forcefully if their survivors are not administering the property left behind in the right manner or obeying the prescriptions laid down to the kanda on their decease.

They thus manifest themselves in order to show that they are alive even in the land of the dead, and are following, on nseke a mpanga, the doings of their survivors to see whether they are acting in conformity with their instructions and behests.

Bankuyu cannot, however, reveal themselves in any part of man that they choose; it is only in nsala that they can show themselves.

But also the banganga are able to call up the dead if anyone desires to see them. On such occasions they go to the burial place and the nganga asks: "Whom do you wish me to take out of the grave for you?" The other may perhaps reply: "I want to see my dead mother". The nganga thereupon puts chalk in his eyes. When the mistiness has been dissipated from his eyes he sees his deceased mother standing erect, just as when she was alive. This, however, the nganga is able to do only at the grave, in the house or at the burial place.

To mention the name of one recently deceased is preferably avoided, as such a reference is a reminder of that sorrow and may give rise to fresh weeping.

If one wishes to say that someone has died, the following circumlocutions may often be used: "He has gone to pick his kola-nuts", "He has gone and caught his game", "She has gone to the peanut field", "She has climbed up death's mountain" or, if it is a matter of younger persons and twins, "She has gone to fetch wood".

Those who have died a Nzambi-death have not died of nkasa. They live for ever in their village, in the grave. They do not die any more; they feel joy there, they work and cultivate their crops as we do. Wherever there are graves their village is in the vicinity.

Those who have died of nkasa and bavunga (those who have been shot by nkisi Nduda) frequent the moors and the woods. They pass over to bankuyu. A vunga human being is buried, but he leaves the grave and carries his nkwalá-mats on his back; he has no rest, but wanders weeping year after year.

One who has died of nkasa is burned. When he arises from the dead he carries a fire-brand in his hand on the moors year after year, where he becomes a nkuyu. Others believe that a person remains dead for ever, and is never resurrected.

One who goes to the woods is kinyumba (a spectre). As he has been in the village, so he

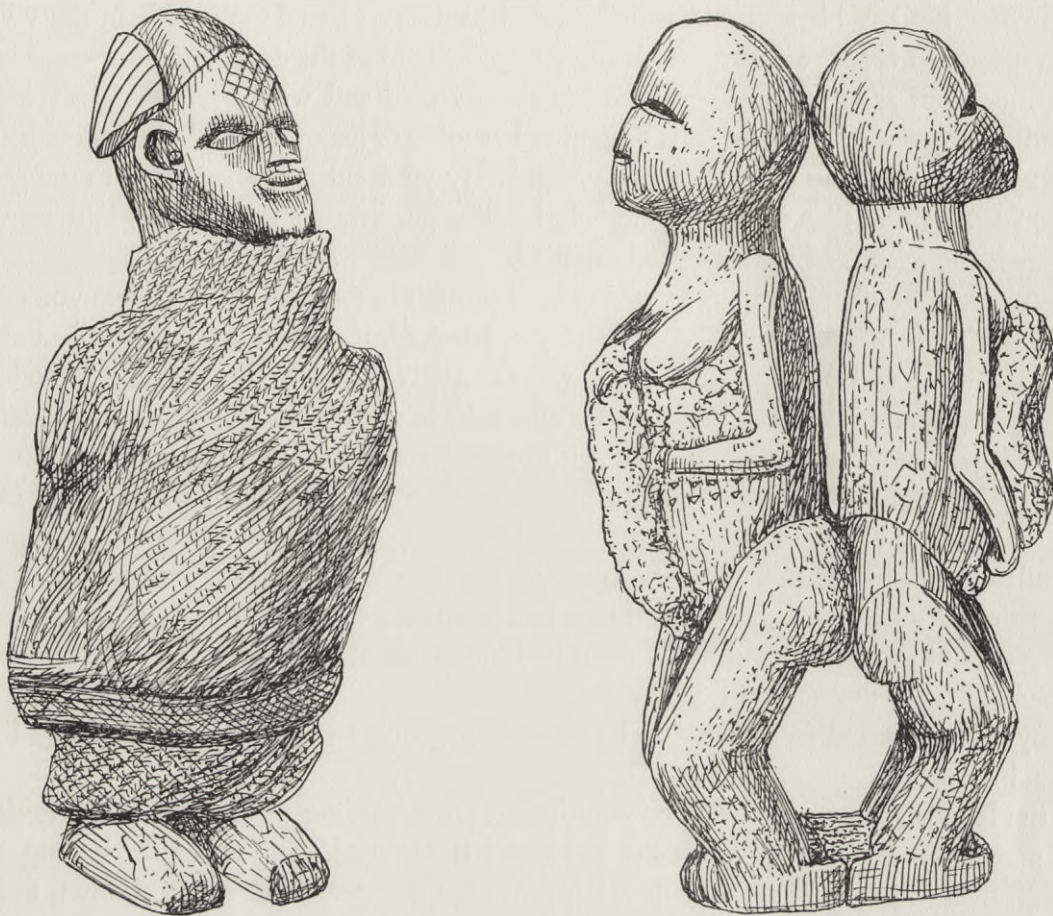


Fig. 5. A, Sculpture of an ancestor (?), Sundi in Mukimbungu (Laman 621); B, Nkisi Kwanza, Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 527).

remains here. If he has been blind, full of sores, leprous, so he remains here. His appearance is not changed.

One who has been drowned is no kinyumba, for the fishes have devoured him. Nor are those who have become mad through nkisi Mya Kyese kinyumba. They have made an end of his kyutu. Only those who die through ndoki remain in the grave for ever.

The terms Nsingi a mpati and mvandi a Mbumba come from Nsingi, who is an evil simbi-spirit who wanders, strong and powerful, in the woods. This simbi has a peer, Mbumba, who wanted to excel Nsingi in power. But behold! Nsingi made a ntete-basket for Mbumba and placed it in a terrible ravine into which no-one dares to look. Hither are consigned all who wish to excel their chiefs in power.

Nsingi a mpati is the first simbi, who allied himself to Funza to bend and distort, to make such things as trees, branches in the woods, crooked. This it is Nsingi's business to do; the name derives from singa (to curse, etc.). Every person who has been fatally cursed by Nsingi a mpati must go to the terrible place he has prepared. All those with wicked habits must go there.

If anyone has any blemish or has had wicked habits and hated the people in the village he is summoned before a court, on his entry into the land of the dead, and cross-examined. Many questions are posed by one who has already died and whom he previously hated. Sometimes there are fights and he is beaten, unless some of his own people have died before this and are able to help him. Hence a saying: "May your elder brother come to the grave before you. He will then intervene and help his younger brother". If the questions are well answered, the friends of the deceased are glad.

They say, *inter alia*: "You were thriving well enough in the village, why have you come here?" — "I was attacked." — "Why were you attacked, if not for a crime you had committed?" — He will perhaps answer: "It wasn't strictly a crime. I shot a nkabi-antelope, a wild pig etc., and it was not sufficient for everyone in the village. It gave rise to a quarrel, and then they attacked me". "But did you not then reply: I shall shoot another animal?" — "Yes, but they did not let me go, but tormented me with sickness, so that I came here."

Similar questions are put to the women, to ascertain whether they were generous and compassionate during their life-time. If they had not been generous enough they had begged for mercy; but those who had hated them had bound them with sharp creepers (torments) and handed them the noose of death.

They are conducted from the gate by their own people to their respective village location and kanda.

In the land of the dead reward or punishment are according to the individual deeds of each person. The good man remains good and is received with gladness, dancing and feasting. Everything is fine and proper. Papyrus mats are spread out and laid down in fine houses.

The compassionate, those who have conformed with prescriptions and laws, and who have prospered on earth are also in the land of the dead very popular and liked.

As good and compassionate is considered one who has helped the members of his family, children without fathers and mothers, who has lent his support at lawsuits, received strangers well and been otherwise open-handed, who has not tormented slaves and has made substantial contributions at burials etc.

The wicked, pitiless and lawless and their like are not received by the people in the land of the dead. The courtyard is empty, not a sound is heard. Nor, if a person contravenes a given kandu-prohibition and dies a sudden death, is he given any reception in the land of the dead. But if the individual who has made the prohibition is willing to rescind it, the deceased may fare well and be received in the other world. But if the one who has proclaimed the prohibition had died, then some member of his kanda may through invocation and sacrifices get the prohibition cancelled, and in this case the deceased will be received in the huts.

If the prohibition cannot be cancelled the deceased person who has made it may come and show himself to and torment the one who has disobeyed it. It may refer to the property he has left behind.

A wicked person who travels to the land of the dead remains wicked, for he cannot repent. Wicked he was, and wicked he travels thither. If he was one who tormented people while on earth, he will be tormented in the land of the dead, for when those who had suffered at his hands see him they take revenge upon him for his deeds.

If such persons had bound people on earth, beaten and wounded them, then those they had tormented take corresponding revenge on them. Indeed, pepper is rubbed in their eyes and manifold reprisals are taken in the land of the dead.

A chief who is a *ndoki* and knows the deceased in the woods may even sleep with his late favourite wife and have children by her. But none of his other wives can then give birth to children.

The dead may help the living if the latter get into difficulties. A deceased person may then reveal himself to a living person in a dream, and tell him where he has hidden possessions for him. When in the morning the person in question goes and has a look, he finds the possessions whereby he is to be helped. The prize may be poultry or pigs and so forth, but first they must dream of them. The deceased may also injure the living. They may take away their animals, peanuts and manioc etc. But these persons will soon die and will follow what has been taken from them, for it is the *nsala-soul* that has been taken.

The dead may also pursue the living to the woods or the place of burial and beat them. If they go to a dance in the evening, the dead may wrap dung in leaves and fling it in their faces; they may strike them with withies or banana offsets. At night-time, furthermore, the deceased may come to the courtyard to drink palm wine with the living. When someone is carrying a heavy load on his back the dead may sometimes pick out one thing after another, so that when he arrives at his destination with his basket there is nothing left in it. The dead also go to the palm groves to drink palm wine. They are thus revenged upon those who have wronged them, for the vexations they had to suffer during their lives. The deceased are careful to see that the living bury their dead well and give them a rich shroud, and likewise that they look after their children properly. In this case the living will fare well when in their turn they come to the land of the dead, where they will receive all kinds of gifts as a mark of gratitude. In due time the living will also receive gifts of gratitude if they lay out on the graves all sorts of porcelain objects and other things the deceased formerly possessed.

If a human being has died through *kindoki* he is terrible in his wrath and power. With the help of a *nganga* he must make away with this *ndoki*. The *nganga* first cuts off the nails from fingers and toes of the deceased. He then cuts up medicine (*luyalu*, *nkandikila*, *lunungu lwa nsamba*) and puts this, together with the nails, chalk and small stones (*shots*), into a loaded gun. When the *nganga* sees them coming to the grave with the corpse he says: "Bote kafyole, have you eaten, female or male *ndoki*, may you weep at the crossroads or in the field. Chalk, make the eyes really clear-sighted, so that he may see the *ndoki* that devoured you. *Luyalu*, rule carefully all *bandoki*, so that not a single one may be left. You, *nkandikila*, put obstacles at all cross-roads where *bandoki* are roving about. *Lunungu lwa nsamba*, may you try carefully to get the scent of the *bandoki*, those who have devoured

you." As soon as he has said these words he fires the gun and the shot goes t-e-e-e. The nganga then runs quickly home without turning round.

Of all the dead the bankuyu are the most malicious in their cunning. They have formerly been bandoki. If they return to the village and render the people too uneasy, they may be properly killed by firing shots into the grave. A nganga smells out the grave in which a nkuyu lives. They reopen the grave, continuing to dig until they find the nkuyu with his hand before his face, so that he shall not be recognized. However, the nganga shoots him at once with his gun and burns him up in a fire. Now he is dead for ever, and is transformed into a frog, lizard, nkongudi-lizard, crocodile or some other animal.

Although the land of the dead is called kutwa zingila (where we shall live), this refers only to those who have died the nzambi-death, for they cannot die again. But those who have been killed with nkasa or nkisi guns, and those who are killed once more become nkita nsi (beings of different kinds that can enter the body) or simbi-spirits. If they die a third time they are transformed into termite-stacks, nyumba or kanyaya grass. This is their end. One often hears this grass rustling when a nkuyu has died for the third time.

Others who are transformed and die again go to heaven. When they get there they do the same work as they did on earth, hoe peanuts, tap palm wine, fetch water and wood, prepare food and so forth. But as soon as the dry season sets in they lose their lives on the spot where they stand and in the work they are performing. As soon as the thunder rolls and the first rains fall they are awakened, each in his place, and continue their work.

Many tales recount how bankuyu are caught with snares. Once they made a big cage and put a nkuyu in it. They then took it to Boma, so that the Europeans might see and buy it. A song about this has been preserved in the tradition.

One who has died for the second time cannot again enter the life of a human being and be born once more. A male ndoki may, however, attack a kinyumba and turn it into a tiny little thing that he may introduce into a human being, to torment him with sickness for many years. Yet Sakuzi's nganga can take away such a kinyumba. If a ndoki has not sufficient strength to attack a kinyumba, the latter may defeat the ndoki and itself enter his body. Such a kinyumba is then called kinyumba-kanza (snake). Kanza refers to a very mighty force in a deceased person. Such a kinyumba cannot be taken away by a nganga. A person harbouring one must eat nkasa. If he gets nkasa but does not die, he has a kinyumba in his body. But kinyumba die from nkasa. This is known, for when someone has eaten nkasa and the sickness has left the body kinyumba has died.

A dead person may become visible to others, but he cannot make himself visible by his own efforts. A ndoki, however, may go and lift up the kyutu of the dead man and show it to someone who is in the village. It has then exactly the same appearance as it had here on earth; and this is a sign that some member of the kanda will soon die. If the deceased was a nganga, he can manifest himself through the power of the ndoki that ate him and ruined his body. If the nganga's minkisi followed him, they give him the power to reveal himself to the one who hated him. The banganga themselves can see a deceased person through magic and their minkisi.

The nganga makes the dead visible in the following way. He goes to the graves, beats to-to-to-to on kimpenzingila-leaves and says "naté-té". He has already enumerated the kanda names and he can quickly make any one of the deceased visible according to their desires.

If a deceased person should meet anyone from the village the former immediately turns his back to him, for if he should be seen squarely in the face the living person would die.

If one is told that someone sees a dead person, one must stand up at once. If someone comes whistling like the wind and kills a person in a twinkling, the people must be quite silent. They may not speak and are unable to think, and fall into a faint.

One is sometimes surprised to hear people chatting and laughing. But no-one is there if one looks to see. In such a case the nsala of these persons is not at the full.

One may sometimes hear someone moaning in the woods, hear the nkobo-grass shaking itself, nodding backwards and forwards, hear the dead chopping wood, calling out or dancing and so on. If one hears a bird flying to and fro in the sky, this is a ndoki. They may also reveal themselves in many other ways.

Bandoki may move a sick person to bankuyu in the woods; but the sufferer may then be liberated by Mpanzu's nganga, who binds him and leads him back to life sound and strong. The nganga and the sick man are in this case friends, and it is difficult for others to do anything against it.

A nkuyu may be caught when stealing poultry or bananas etc. It is also possible to shoot him, bury him again and therewith transform him into a big termite-stack.

One who has contravened the laws for a nkisi and not become reconciled with the latter will find no mercy in the land of the dead. He may be sent to Nsingi a mpati's land, that will recompense him through suffering and weave him into a ntete-basket and bind him fast with burning bind-wood as nkusa-nkusa.

If any person has killed another, bakisi that cause madness will attack and punish him in the land of the dead.

When one who has failed to comply with a kandu-injunction becomes visible in the land of the dead to the one who has cursed him with kandu, he gets a hard blow, so that he does not build his house on his own estate. Thus those who are under a curse are punished both on earth and in the other world. In many cases sickness and death are regarded as the actual vengeance, for sickness comes as a consequence of disobedience to nkisi-laws, broken promises and other crimes.

If a wicked individual has been punished through sickness etc. and repents his evil deeds, slaughters a pig and gives a present to bisimbi, they are to forgive him; and if he altogether renounces his bad way of life he will not meet with difficulties in the land of the dead. He will not be punished.

A human being who repents his misdeeds will escape punishment here on earth, as also in the other world. But one who persists in ill-doing will be punished by Nsingi a mpati himself year after year.

Those who provide shrouds for their relatives and rulers, keep commandments, set the required objects on the graves, shoot the gunpowder and so on are rewarded in various



ways. Those who act contrary to this, who are hard and greedy, on the other hand, are punished in various ways.

If anyone has died in the evening and bankuyu are not willing to lead him to Mpemba that same evening, they bind him to the house post before the door. They put kimbanzya-grass on the deceased and manioc leaves in his mouth, so that he cannot speak, as he would otherwise do when he beheld the women weeping.

Those who have been in a state of suspended animation and have come to their senses again say that in Mpemba they have been astonished at hearing the salute from the guns. They believe that a solemn occasion is being celebrated on earth. But when they discover that their relative has died and that he is being bewailed with salvos they only laugh. Sometimes the old people dance when they see their relatives come to Mpemba.

A woman named WINU said: "If now my own child should die I should weep bitterly for a little while, but if it were not my own, I should not linger in lamentation, for I know how we are when we have died. We who remain behind opine that they have died, they have died as if they had not died. They live".

The deceased excels the living in strength and power, because he is altogether otherwise. He has the spirit of the wind, a shape in the likeness of Nzambi and his strength; for this reason many refer to the corpse as nzambi.

Lawsuits are held in the land of the dead. If anyone dreams that he is summoned and dies to bear witness in suits for those who remain on earth, this happens through kindoki.

That the dead are able to bless their own people emerges from the ancestor cult.

The shade or spirit (mwela) reveals itself only as a little gust of wind that rustles; and then one may also see him and know whether it is the father or some other relative. He may also speak, and say, for example: "Let us go, you are suffering much distress" (i.e. you should die and come here) or: "You must fulfil the promise you made" and so on.

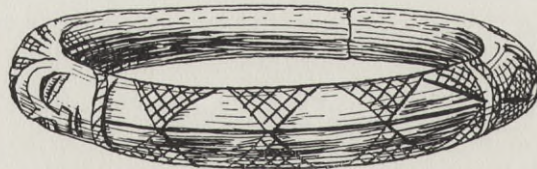


Fig. 6. Armlet of brass, Punu in Masendjo (Laman 65).

## CHAPTER IV

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### Tales Concerning the Dead

In September 1903, when I, KUNZI, was lying down, I heard someone pass my house in the middle of the night. I arose and heard the dogs barking and running away. The passer-by went and knocked at the door of the brick house. He shook the door violently, but could not get in. As he was not able to open he went away to another house and shook it. The boys lived there. They were terrified and could not speak. But in the morning I asked them if they had heard anything. They told me how someone had wanted to come in, but went away to the brick house. We then thought that it was the deceased So-and-so, who had come here to see to his house and his things.

A boy died that month, and then we thought that he had come to take him as a servant.

In October the same year we heard him come back. Then, too, he went to the boys' house, pulled nyanga-grass from the roof and walked round the house as before. The boys shrieked with fear, and we went to let them out to let them sleep in another house.

Another night he came again to another house where the women lived, and began to bang on the door and feel with his hands along the walls of the house. When we heard about this in the morning I told them to seek out a man who would come and see what it was.

Another night the same thing happened. The women then went and awoke LAMBUKILA, and he woke me up so that we might both go and see what it was. We then found how there was a knocking there in the night. That person went on knocking for three hours without our being able to see anything. We heard him knock, and we were all terrified. The women went to sleep in another house.

One day the child of a certain person fell very ill, and then that one came there and shook the house and the door violently. After a time the child died. Then everybody thought it was the dead who had come to fetch the child. There were thus two who had died since the commencement of this business. Now it is all finished, we thought. But by no means. That one came back to the same house and banged at the door and shook the house. Then someone said: "We shall move the house to another place, for the road of the dead probably passes there". They moved the house, but that one followed and did as before.

Another night that one entered a house where a boy lay. He covered himself with the blanket. But that one went straight up to the boy's ear and breathed on him. The boy

cried aloud and rushed out. We ran there to hear what it was. When he had told us, others said: "While we were lying there we, too, heard that one come and bang at the house".

That one kept on in the same way at intervals for a year. Sometimes it was much worse. One night a lot of stones were thrown on the roof of a house. Some fell into the house. This kind of thing took place also in broad daylight. But no-one could see who was doing the throwing.

Finally, the women got together, terrified, in one house. But that one came there and banged on it vehemently, so that in great fear all went out through the door. When that one came, it was like a rushing strong blast.

As this took place in the village at Mukimbungu mission station, we called the whites to come and see and let us understand what it could be. Among these was taata LAMAN and two others.

"I LAMAN hereby confirm these phenomena. One evening we went down to have a look, and it was then that the terrified women were foregathered in a big grass house. While we went about there one of the long walls of the house was pounded with heavy blows, so that the house shook, so that maize etc. hung up in the house tumbled down. We had a lantern with us to investigate, but we saw nothing. It was, moreover, entirely out of the question that a human being should have been able to do it. The following day we tried to bang on the wall as hard as we could. But neither the sound of the blows nor the violence of them was anything like those of the previous evening. The owner of the house had earlier been out hunting and had been gored to death by a buffalo, so everyone thought that it was his ghost. We tore down the brick house and built a store with the bricks, after which everything seems to have stopped."

KUNZI continues. Everybody wondered why this happened. Some related that when that one died he had said they must not burn his things or throw them away, but give them to his mother and others. But this they had not done, for the women burned his hat and shoes and threw away ivory rings and so on. This is why this terrible business had occurred.

Some thought it was on account of sin, so that the people should abandon it. A few said: "It is the dead, who are manifesting that they are alive". Others, finally: "Perhaps it is a very evil person who has died and is now not popular in the land of the dead, so he returns to the earth and in his wrath does such things".

Similar things occurred in a nearby village, because the kanda did not carry the deceased to the mission churchyard, as he had decided. They buried him in the village. But that same night terror descended on the latter through blows on the house where the deceased had died. The women cried out and the men came hurrying, but there was nobody to be seen. They only heard the blows. The dogs fled and barked.

Then they asked the widow what the man had said before he died. She told them that he had wanted to be buried among other members of the congregation in the mission churchyard. But she had quite forgotten this.

Such phenomena with hard blows and the like had occurred earlier in the same village. Thus it is related that on one occasion while dancing was going on a woman gave her child

to a virgin she had not seen before, as the latter had said: "Bring your child here while you are dancing and you'll get it back when you have finished". The mother gave it at once to the virgin. When she had finished dancing she looked for her child among her people, but no-one had seen either the child or the virgin that had received it. Nor did the mother recognize the voice of the latter, and it was therefore believed that the child had been received by a dead person.

Formerly the dead had often come and danced among those living here on nseke a mpanga. The villagers did not recognize them, but they understood what they were, for at first cock crow they wanted to stop and go home. They did not want to wait for the light, for then they would be recognized.

One day, when NAMBULU died, they dressed her in her skin with dog-bells that she had been wearing while dancing. At night, when the people were lying down, she went about with her skin and the bells all over the village. Everybody then understood that the dead live and that they go about in the same shape as they had on earth.

Formerly, the people sowed maize in the field at Nkondo, i.e. the place where Chief NAVUNDA was buried. When the maize had ripened the dead went there to pick it. Those who owned the plots came and found a deal of maize had been plucked. They thought that thieves were responsible.

Another day the same thing had happened. The people then took kunda-rattles and went to the field to curse the thieves who had stolen their maize. They persevered with adjurations and conjurations the whole day.

In the evening the dead came again and plucked maize cobs. But they cursed also those who are on nseke a mpanga and said: "The maize at Nkondo we eat together with you. If you conjure (koma nloko), then we die with you". The dead thought that if they plucked the maize jointly with the living this was no crime. "We and yourselves are of the same kanda. You are Navunda and we are Navunda". They therefore sought to curse each other no more.

Similarly, the dead might also dig up manioc; and if poultry was sometimes taken by wild beasts it was thought that it was some deceased member of their kanda that needed it.

In October 1905 the women were planting peanuts. They sang: "E, DUDU is sleeping, belches from them, month after month, hoe deeply. DUDU is sleeping, belches from them". When they had finished they went home. In the evening at the hour for gossip also the deceased sang at the edge of the woods near the field where the living had been sowing. Everybody in the village heard them singing. Many of those who heard them are still alive. Some said: "Also the dead can hear what we say and sing here on earth. They, too, sow their peanuts and cultivate the soil like us".

Another time, late at night, we heard loud lamentation from the quarter where our village had formerly been located. We thought that one of the sick persons at the mission station had died. But when we enquired the following morning, no-one had died, and they had not heard anyone weeping. We were very astonished at this.

Another night the weeping started again. They heard it. They got up and went out to listen. They heard the weeping from the quarter where the brick house had been. The boys there heard it also. The people said: "Why must they foretell in that way that someone is going to die?" And in a little while people in the village died.

Where we had formerly built our village there were also other frightening phenomena. If someone went past in the evening the dead might pursue him and throw stones at him. The village was moved but rebuilt a couple of times. Some were of the opinion that the dead lived there or else had their burial place there, and that they were therefore so angered. This is why they wanted us to take our houses away.

The old people believed that the dead were cultivating their fields and burning their heaps of mazala-grass, for when they were passing fields where there were no people they felt the warmth of fires in the evening.

When my mother had been buried she came home to her house after about a month evening after evening. The rings round her ankles, which jingled, were the sign that she had come. She opened the door as she had been wont to do and stepped in. Some went to look and listen, but they found the door to be closed. She took her peanuts from the shelf. When she shook herself the rings jingled mbyeke-mbyeke. Then she took the peanuts and went out. The sound of her closing the door could be heard. But no-one could see her. She came evening after evening as soon as darkness began to fall and the hens went in. But then they burned down the house and all became quiet. But she did not come in vain. My sister died in those days, and everyone knew that she had come to fetch my sister. Now she does not come any more, for a dead person cannot come to the village without reason. But then they want to tell us that they are not properly dead, but are alive. And if this had not happened, how should we then have been able to believe that the dead live (KUNZI).

There was a motherless child who was not getting enough food. But his deceased mother came and fetched him in order to give him food. When they got to Mpemba she stuffed food into his food bag and brought him back to the village. When they came close to our roads there was a strong rushing wind, and the eyes became clear-sighted and the child returned to earth and came home to the village. This orphan is still alive. His name is KIZANGULA.

Another orphan boy and his sister were not getting sufficient food. But their mother showed herself to the orphans to give them food. But she found that they were also in need of pieces of cloth, and for this reason she was to tell the father that they were to meet on the morrow to receive cloth. "But if your father wants you to drink palm wine, do not drink it, for then he will fetch you".

When it had become light and the time they had agreed upon was come, she set off for the rendez-vous. There she saw a wind rushing forward, and they were there. They sat down. They drank palm wine; but when the father gave some to the boy he refused to take it and drink. The father got angry. When the boy arrived home he was sick and speechless. The mother came and said: "You shall not suffer any harm. You will get well.

Father threatened you because he wanted to fetch you, for he has no-one to tap palm wine for him". He got well and is now a man, sound and strong.

A woman named NZAU left a child after her. When she was about to die she said: "They must not let the child go about begging from others". When she died and found that her child was not getting enough food she came and kept the house supplied constantly with food. Her brother, who had also survived her, thought: "That food she doubtless steals". One day, accordingly, he bound the child to a group of pineapples. But as soon as it became dark he had a dream: "Why have you bound my child to the pineapples? What cruelty is this? When it is I who come and give to the child, then do not say that she has stolen others' food. Should I not behold this with pain?" In the morning, after he had cracked a pumpkin seed, he spoke of this. He died just afterwards.

Chief NSWINDI heard the hens cackling night after night. One day he took a gun and waited in ambush, as a hen had been taken. Something came creeping up in the darkness. It resembled a human being. It went past in the direction of the hen-house. Then he shot at it. He had scored a hit, for it groaned fearfully. Towards morning it died. They looked at the dead marauder. They lifted it up to go and bury it again. It was extremely light. The neck was twisted.

In another place, when the hens began to lay, the eggs disappeared. At first they thought it was a snake that had taken them. But they could not find any trace of a snake. The hens laid, but no eggs remained. They thereupon began watching their dogs, and even people, to see if they had stolen them. But they could find nothing. A person then tried hiding to keep on guard a whole day. But he found no thief. They now began to think of laying a snare at the entrance to the hen-house. They twisted fibers into a rope and fixed a strong spring-pole and then set the snare. In the morning when they examined the snare they found the eggs untouched, but there was nothing in the snare. It will probably come back, they thought. But it did not come the next night either. Then some other night a nkuyu came and was going to enter the hen-house to take the eggs. But the snare was released (ngu) and caught one arm of the nkuyu. Now the people heard: "E, let go my arm, that's your egg. E, let go my arm!" Those who were in their houses only listened. Next they heard him coughing and saying again and again: "Let go my arm!" He carried on in this way the whole night. His voice was ugly and horrible.

As soon as day dawned they took their guns and went to see what it was. They saw a lot of bushy hair hanging down in the snare. The villagers exclaimed: "So this is what bankuyu look like". They clapped their hands in pure astonishment. People from adjacent villages also came to have a look at the nkuyu. So, there are really bankuyu.

All the old people know one thing, viz., that if anyone meets a kinyumba and has no gun to shoot it with, he must remove the loin-cloth from his behind so that he is left naked, for then the kinyumba starts laughing and cannot pursue him any farther.

If a kinyumba that has been shot dies, it is transformed into a lizard (screeching lizard) that sits for ever in a little hole and screeches. It is the end, as it has died for the second time.

In the land of the dead the chiefs may wage war with one another. Then it often happens

that they take men from the earth to come and help them. The banganga say that this is the case when many sick people die in the village. If banyumba die in war they are turned into makukwa-termites stacks beside some water.

The corpses of famous personages travel with their byutu (sing. kyutu) to the sea. This is what e.g. NKAYA NKYAMA did. He died in the morning. At midday he was carried off with difficulty. When he was buried he remained in the grave for only one day. The following day at noon there came a sign: there was speaking in the sky. When the people went to see the grave they found it open. Not a single thing remained in it. The grave is still open to this day.

I have many such narratives from the Mayombe tract dealing with chiefs or banganga who had died a nzambi-death or who had been bandoki and died either a good or an evil death.

Those who have died so go to six different places.

One who dies a nzambi-death and is not wicked (a ndoki) goes to the village in the woods, where he fares well.

One who dies from nkasa wanders about on the plain and has no house to live in.

One who steals etc. but dies a nzambi-death is permitted to live in the midst of the woods or in his grave. If he is a chicken thief he eats the hens in the grave.

One who is a great nganga and well versed in magic goes to heaven. His kyutu must show itself no more on earth.

A person who has died an evil death and proved to be a ndoki (i.e. stares up at the sky, has jerky spasms in arms and legs and so forth) goes to the sea, so that he shall not be a laughing stock for his deceased fellows in the woods.

If a chief or a rich person who has been a friend of basimbi goes to their byutu, to the water or ravines where basimbi rule, he never gets anything to eat, for basimbi do not eat.

A woman named MPUNGI was ill for four days and died on the fifth at dawn. She arose at 9 a.m. When she had gained strength they asked her: "How are you?" — "I have only been sleeping. But I was fetched by ndoki to conclude a dispute. I have by no means been dead. But so many people there were there, both young and old. It is different there from here. There one is not allowed to move about as one may here. One must first ask NAVAKA for it is a big country with many people. Those disputes can perhaps not be entirely settled. But if this is the case ndoki will come and fetch me again."

A month and a half after this she said: "Now ndoki has come to fetch me as NAVAKA said". She then said to her fellow female: "Now you must look after my children very carefully. Don't torment them, but look after them as if they were your own". She: "Yes, but where are you going?" — MPUNGI: "But I have told you that I will help them to conclude a palaver. Farewell!" And she died once and for all.

A boy was sleeping at night when he saw a woman advancing towards him. She said: "You go on ahead to the grave, I shall first collect my peanuts". — The boy: "Yes!" When he woke up he spoke of the matter to his mother, but she replied: "Manata ntu a tulu kwami" (It took the dream away with it, i.e. it is without significance). "But we shall see whether

it is followed by a sickness." The boy was ill for two months, the third month he died. He said: "I am going away for ever on account of that dream alone, but do not mourn".

After two months the grass fires were burning, and the woman approached to go to her kanda. But then she met the boy to whom she had given a promise. He was sitting by the roadside with crossed legs and nodding his head in the way he did when he was alive. He said to her: "Was I not supposed to go before you to the grave and you would come afterwards, when you had harvested your peas and your peanuts? How is it, has the time come? For me it has come. Let us go. But whom shall I be near in the grave when you take such a long time?" The woman did not answer a single word. She went home and only wept. Many asked what she was weeping for, but she mentioned that the boy had come to fetch her according to a promise she had given him. "It was he who has been with our mother BENDO."

The woman was very ill for six days, and on the seventh she died. When we saw that we thought: "It is not good to wish that someone may die first".

LUBAKU was in the habit of sawing planks in the woods together with another. One day the latter was going to have a rest, and LUBAKU went alone. When he got to the edge of the plain he saw a mvudi-antelope. He said: "Alas, if only I had had my gun and been able to shoot it". He aimed at it with his finger. The antelope looked at him sharply, although he threw a stone at it. He went closer to grasp it by the horns. But behold, he did not see whither it went. He abused the antelope, saying: "Go, you, you dead mother". Then he went off to do his sawing. He set to work, but did not see rightly how he should saw the trunk. He wanted to turn it, but then it slipped and pinned his leg. He groaned: "E, mother, I am going away. E, mother, I am dying".

When the antelope heard this it came and barked at the edge of the woods in the direction from which LUBAKU's groans were coming. He extricated his leg, but had not the strength to go home to the village. He called out to the people in the village, and they came. He was given medicine, but was ill for two and a half weeks.

He then came to reflect that if he had had his gun and shot the antelope he would have been shooting a human being and would have died on the spot.

When MALANDA was out hunting he once saw that wild pigs had passed in the direction of the peanut fields. He followed their spoor a long way. They had gone into the woods and gone out again onto the plain. They went up a big mountain and down again and once more into a forest to a source. At the spring he saw a lot of pigs standing. He crouched down to get his gun ready. Just then he heard a voice: "What have you done, following us? We passed the peanut field, we ate nothing there". When he looked up he saw a human being standing there in the midst of the wild pigs with a switch in his hand. His gun fell to the ground, he lay down and fell asleep, and did not awake until darkness began to fall. He returned speechless to the village and mentioned what he had seen as soon as Lemba's nganga had come to let him crack a pumpkin seed.

Another hunter also went out to hunt wild pigs. He caught sight of them and got very close to them. He lifted his gun to aim at one of the pigs, and behold, it was a human being.



He lowered his gun and followed the pigs until he was quite close again. He took aim at a big pig, but behold, when he was ready to shoot it was a human being. This happened a couple more times, and so he had to abandon the hunt.

A buffalo hunter formerly went to hunt buffalo. He soon found one and shot it. Yet he was not satisfied, and shot another, which he wounded. He followed the animal, walking on and on until he arrived at the village of the buffaloes. The one who owned the buffalo said: "Have you not got one? That is surely enough for you. But you think only of shooting, and think the buffaloes are not owned by anybody". He shaved the marksman's entire head and told him not to do it again.

But the latter did not obey. He soon went out hunting buffaloes again. He shot at one, wounding it. He followed it and arrived at the buffaloes' village again. This time he disappeared for ever.

MPESO, the father of the medal chief in KINGILA's village, had sores on his toes so that he found walking difficult. One day he was longing for a smoke, but there was nobody near who might have given him a glowing ember. Then he saw a dog lying beside him and MPESO therefore complained of his need and said: "E, if you, dog, were a human being you'd go and get me a little fire". No sooner had he said this than the dog got up and went to fetch a light and put it down at his feet. MPESO was astonished, for it was the dog of his deceased friends. He said: "Has someone put those thoughts into you, as if it were yourself?" He smoked his tobacco and suffered no harm from the vision.

Two women had hoed and sown their field with maize. But monkeys began to come to eat it up. The women erected huts and kept watch there for some days. Then they were to go home to the village of Binkindi, but it began to rain in torrents, so they took shelter in a couple of huts on the way. They went to sleep and started to snore. They did not know that bankuyu were looking at them. One of the bankuyu was feeling cold and he went and sat down beside the fire. One of the women took an ember, put it in her pipe and smoked. The other lay sleeping; she had a dream and said: "But what is that on the other side of the fire?" The other woman looked up and got a fright. A nkuyu was sitting there hugging his knees and smoking his pipe. The woman shrieked: "E, what is this?" The nkuyu: "E, maama, poke up the embers a bit for me, I have come to get fire. I've come to eat you up".

The woman hastily snatched a brand and flung it straight into the bushy hair of the nkuyu. I caught fire and blazed up. The nkuyu shrieked: "Yaaya, now I am being killed for the second time, yaaya".

His own bankuyu came up and said: "Why should you go there? Hurry to the water and dive in". He dived and dived and came up shivering terribly. He dived again, but came up with half his head charred, quite burned up. The woman rushed home. Not many days afterwards she died.

## Basimbi

Basimbi or bisimbi are, according to some people, in a class by themselves among the dead, because they are human beings who have died twice, first on earth and then in the land of the dead. They lived and died on earth in times long past and then, after an unbelievably long life in the land of the dead, they died again and were then transformed into the basimbi of the earth. People who lived in more recent times, do not become basimbi. Others, again, are of the opinion that the basimbi are a special class of beings created by Nzambi, living in the underworld, but communicating with the dwellers of the earth. The basimbi are divided into land and water spirits. The latter prefer to stay near rapids and in deep ravines or water-filled caves. They are found wherever people dwell. As the basimbi (from *simba*, hold, keep, preserve) safeguard the country, man could not exist anywhere without them.

They have their own tribes and chieftainries, such as the basimbi of Mazinga, of Bwende, of the Nsundi and Congo shores, conformable to mundane conditions. Thus the basimbi that live in the countries of Navunda or Namazinga are called the basimbi of Navunda or those of Namazinga. Among the basimbi, too, a tribe is divided in *mvila*, *makanda* and *nzo*. They live in villages and multiply. The water basimbi are white, those of the underworld are red and dark-skinned. The basimbi are able to hear and see man, whereas man cannot perceive them. The basimbi watch over the human members of their respective *makanda*. Children have their own guardian basimbi. Similarly, fishing and hunting as well as the trades have special basimbi. This patronage means rich catches of fish to the people, game in abundance, and property that multiplies. Their duty is to assist man. They never harm him, unless he has done wrong. If someone has been robbed, for instance, he may call on the basimbi to watch those who go swimming. If the thief is among them, he may become mortally ill. If the culprit crosses a river without confessing his guilt, the basimbi may even capsize his canoe. The water basimbi are short of stature, no bigger than a large *nkisi* sculpture, and have a fish tail, but a human face. They are honoured and respected. Anyone crossing a water course, in the morning, for instance, should first pluck a leaf or green grass-stalk and throw it in the water as a thanksgiving offering before ferrying across. If he neglects this, the basimbi may pursue the traveller to his home and punish him with some illness. If somebody fetches water by a waterfall, the basimbi may

drag him under the water and keep him there. The nganga commanding the most powerful nkisi must then invoke the basimbi, begging them to let the victim go. If the accident should happen on a nkenge day,<sup>1</sup> the invocations must be made on successive nkenge days. The first time only one arm of the victim is seen, the second nkenge day both arms appear and the invocations, accompanied by drumming, singing and handclapping are continued, until at last the victim returns, his body painted with chalk and red nkula. Everyone falls into ecstasy at the sight of him. He also brings minkisi, given him to cure the sick.

On his arrival at the village, a mat is spread for him and he must relate his experiences in the land of the basimbi. He recounts: "In the land of the basimbi there are immense villages. They eat as we do. They marry and have children. But I did not eat their food, or I would never have returned to earth". The audience sings: "Let us make haste, tell us all you have seen". If somebody is caught by a crocodile, it is at the behest of the basimbi or he would not have been caught.

Those who are able to see the basimbi were born with a cloven head (i.e. they fall into ecstasy at the slightest provocation). They see the basimbi quite clearly in the water, because their mind works in a queer way. They are in a category midway between the wise and the simpletons.

The basimbi work. Their houses, however, never need rebuilding, as they consist of rock caves. Otherwise they are like human beings. When making merry, they pound small drums and shake small nsansi rattles and kunda bells beneath the stones, which can be heard quite distinctly at dawn and at sundown. When they are very old, the basimbi may die. They are then transformed into termite hills by the water or in the plain, according to their origin. Travellers on the important caravan roads throw a leaf or a stalk of grass in sacrifice on passing such a termite hill, praying for a safe journey.

The basimbi receive gifts in other ways too, consisting of peanuts, maize or potatoes. Those who have received minkisi from the water basimbi, make their gifts to a nganga. On receiving such gifts, the nganga immediately scatters them on the ground for the underworld basimbi to see, so they will know that they are honoured. The people grab the gifts and eat them.

Other basimbi have a human shape, they are dwarfish, but stoutly built. The predictions of a simbi dwarf can be affected neither by the living nor by the dead. These basimbi acting as diviners are also called nkita za nsi (the nkita, guardian spirits of the country).

Very old people are sometimes called basimbi, as everything is decided by them. This power is accorded them because they are considered the basimbi (guardians) of the country. They are also called nkita, bakinda nsi (the powerful of the country) or bakiiza nsi (the renevants of the country).

When a complicated law-suit is to be tried, the decision rests with these notables.

The basimbi cannot be conjured by nloko formulas. If necessary, the water basimbi can be conjured through nkisi Nkondi or nkisi Nsonde. Like the ancestors, the basimbi can be

<sup>1</sup> Nkenge is one of the days in the four-day week of the Kongo, as well as the name of the market held on that day.

invoked to turn a spell of bad luck, whether in tapping palm-wine, fishing, hunting, agriculture or any other enterprise. They may help those who attend to their duties and are charitable. They mete out punishment to some, acquit others. Hence the people sing: "Oh Lord, speak carefully, the old people in the grave may hear you! Eh Father (Mother), speak carefully."

The basimbi are often regarded as identical with the spirits of the dead and as such are called basimbi ba fuku (the basimbi of the night) or bamooko ye kyozi (those with the cold hands, i.e. spirits of the departed). Like certain bankuyu, the basimbi can be captured in the shape of a calabar bean or a beautiful calabash floating on the water.

It happens at times, that boys go for a swim in a pool and suddenly notice that some of them have become quite different from the others. In the confusion that ensues, some of the boys disappear and presently the others hurry back to the village. The nganga is called upon to find out whether the missing boys are alive or dead and whether they have been captured by the basimbi of Londa, or possibly by those of Kongo or Manzanza. When this has been ascertained, the nganga of the appropriate nkisi is called in to locate the boys. The whole village is turned out to circumambulate the pool, including those who are prone to ecstasies. They sing and beat the ndungu drums, creating a stunning din. The nganga besprinkles the pool with medicine and blesses his ecstatic assistants in the same way. They sing: "E-e-e, follow the trail, e-e, where the bandoki walked, e-e, follow the trail where the basimbi walked." When the ecstatic helpers hear the singing and the drums, they begin to shake, quivers running through their entire body and even through their hair. They are thrown into ecstasy and dive into the water to explore the caves and nooks that are frequented by the basimbi-fishes. While the singing and drumming continues, they keep diving, all the while yelling and growling, until they have located the basimbi holding the boys. They penetrate into the lair, grab the boys and, still in a state of ecstasy, bring them up to the surface. On the shore, a tumultuous singing, dancing and drumming commences. The divers growl incessantly and walk with a rolling gait in the ranks of young men and women. When they reach the nganga, they utter loud yells until he besprinkles them with medicine and has them cry three times; "Ha-a-a, ha-a-a, ha-a-a". Not until then does the ecstasy abate so that they relax their grip on the boys. The boys thus recovered look quite different on their return. Some of them have been shaven by the basimbi, leaving only a patch of hair sitting like a cap on their crown. Others have been shaven along the hairline, or sprinkled with red ointment or have their eyeteeth filed to sharp points. Some boys have minga grass threaded through holes pierced in their ears or nose. They may also be adorned with plaits in their hair and other embellishments.

Those who fall into the hands of the basimbi are not allowed to eat boiled food, nor pepper, or they can never be persuaded to return home. The same rule must of necessity be observed by the nganga and his ecstatic helpers venturing into a basimbi village. They may only eat food that is roasted.

The basimbi never capture anyone who is unclothed (i.e. 5-6 years or younger), but only older, and preferably simple-minded people. They never drag anyone down by the

head or neck, only by the limbs. Those who come to fetch water are grabbed by the arms, those who are bathing or wading by the legs.

The villages of the water basimbi are strikingly beautiful and always scrupulously clean. They are located on hills surrounded by plains, that are crossed by roads.

Some of the old people claim that the basimbi never marry, nor do they beget any children. Their power wastes away and they die, but in a manner different from man's. Others believe that the basimbi are like the bankita who enter man's body and afflict his head, his teeth, his arms and his legs with disease.

The basimbi appear only to those they favour, in the guise of a stick, a wooden box, a calabash or a pot, rotating and bobbing up and down on the water. Those who are so favoured by the basimbi transport themselves into ecstasy before picking up the object, it cannot be done otherwise. They dance all the way home and gather their friends together for a great dance festival.

Anyone who manages to capture a simbi, becomes without further initiation a nganga of Mpodi, with the power to suck out bankita (basimbi).

A great many pools are held sacred by different makanda, which means that, with the exception of the grandchildren (batekolo), none of the members of a kanda are allowed to bathe in or fetch water from such a sacred pool.

Some people believe ndongo and mpidi snakes, parrots and white hens to be basimbi. The same applies to crooked or twisted trees and various objects rising to the surface of the water.

Large upright stones and rocks are very often regarded as basimbi, created by Nzambi at the beginning of the world.

Basimbi dwelling in ravines belong to nkisi Nsembu and nkisi Londa.

Basimbi furthermore dwell in those who give birth to albinos or breed fowl that are white, or red and white like parrots, or they may live in a bird-catcher who catches mostly parrots and bring him luck.

In many parts, driver-ants are believed to be basimbi issuing from the underworld. Hence they are also called land nkita, in distinction from the water nkita that are found on the water. No one may step over driver-ants without first breaking a leaf from a tree and throwing it to them as an act of supplication and thanksgiving for success, exactly as with the water basimbi. Driver-ants can sometimes unmask bandoki. When they attack a caravan camp, for instance, their bites make some of the sleepers wake up screaming, whereas those who associate with bandoki are spared.

In southern parts, near the sea, the chief of the basimbi is called Mpulu Buzi, Mpulu Bunzi, Mpulu Bisi or Mangundazi. He manifests himself in torrents and sudden floods that carry away houses, villages and crops. He himself cannot be captured and put into a nkisi bag. South of the Congo, this chief is called Ndoona Bidi and is believed to be a female being, who announces the approach of the dry season as she passes with her host. A battle is fought between the dry season and the rain, until the latter is vanquished and the heavenly beings fall into lethargy.

The simbi Mpangu Lusunzi is an upright stone stuck deep into the ground. It has borne a white child that gazes straight into the sky with both eyes open and is unable to sleep. If a pregnant woman beholds this simbi, her pregnancy will vanish. A long time ago, Mpulu bunzi on his wanderings happened to see Mpangu Lusunzi standing up and asked him: "Why do you stand?" Mpangu Lusunzi answered: "Thus I created myself. I do not want to lie down." Thereupon they grabbed hold of each other and started fighting. Mpulu bunzi won, with a blow that broke Mpangu Lusunzi near his middle. A heavy rain fell incessantly and when next the people passed the spot, they found Mpangu Lusunzi broken in two, as smoothly as if cut with a saw. They raised the part that had broken off.

After this victory, Mpulu bunzi went to the Lulu river, where he found the wife of Mpangu Lusunzi and pinched the nipple off her breast. She is called Mother Mabeene (breast) and is a female simbi stone with a protuberance like a human breast.

The trunk of Mpangu Lusunzi is a rock with four corners, as even as a real trunk.

These three simbi stones belong to the Kimpudi. Their children and grandchildren boast about them, saying: "Eh I, the child of Mpudi Nzinga who is connected with every kanda, I come from Mpangu Lusunzi. He appeared before me. He created my hair and nails. He fought Mpulu bunzi, who was the stronger."

Mbamba is a large sea-shell. Finding many of these shells, the people in the old days consecrated them their bisimbi. They hid their souls in the shells and dug them down in the woods with only the tips showing above ground, addressing them as follows: "As strong as your house you shall keep my life for me. When you leave for the sea, take me along, that I may live forever with you." The sea is the indestructible town of the basimbi. The builders of that town created an eternal realm.

According to the old people, these new bisimbi were not liked by the existing bisimbi, who fought them and drove them back into the sea.



Fig. 7. Grave-sculpture (*kiniongo*), Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 1092).

Kidi-kidi (sound of splashing water) is the name of a waterfilled cave in a rock. The water is so dark that no stones are visible on the bottom. A powerful simbi made it his dwelling and became very influential. A mighty chief, NANGOMA NEUKA, allied himself to the simbi in order to hide his life in the cave. The bandoki, unable to find his life, could not eat the chief who thus lived tremendously long and became as old as the hills. His body turned yellow, small kinkonko animals crawled out of his body. When he died, the people said: "He went away" (i.e. died a natural death, without interference from the bandoki).

When NANGOMA NEUKA had lived for twelve years in the sickness of old age, he was compelled to ask his nephew to fetch six drops of water from the cave and besprinkle him, in order that he might meet his dead ancestors. The nephew did so and the chief died. The old people said that he returned to the simbi chief, as the two had remained friends through the years. That is why NANGOMA NEUKA dwells in Kidi-kidi, instead of in the land of the dead.

This simbi pool is extremely dangerous; man nor beast can jump over it. The bisimbi gave the pool its kidi-kidi sound and they, in their turn, were named for the sound.

The bandoki have agreed upon this pool as a hiding place for their makundu glands. For this reason, they refused in the past to submit to the nkasa trial, but at length a shrewd nganga detected where they hid their glands. Consequently, when a ndoki is to be given nkasa, the nganga addresses a lokolo incantation to Kidi-kidi and the ndoki dies on the spot.

The water-pool Mafubu (pineapple) became later the pool of MENDONDA, as the spot where MENDONDA consecrated himself to nkisi Mbumba. At the ceremony, the villagers acquired a crocodile tooth and the head of a mboma snake as medicines. First, the high nganga of Mbumba loaded a gun with nine makongo stones and pursued the novice, his own assistants and his wife with it. He fired and missed. Thereupon they went to the pool to hide the souls of the novice and the wife. They hid hairs from the forelocks and pubes of both husband and wife, as well as nails from their fingers and toes. They divided them into two lots, as two warriors were to keep the souls of the high nganga and his wife. The assistants and the novice waited on the shore. The high nganga recited the clan motto and summoned the crocodile. When it appeared, the high nganga told it: "Open your jaws". The crocodile gaped and the high nganga threw the souls into its mouth. Thereupon he beat kimpanzingila (across his hand) and the crocodile dived back into the water. Then the high nganga called the mboma snake and told it: "Open your jaws". The snake did as it was told and the high nganga threw the souls into the mouth of the mboma. Again he beat kimpanzingila and the mboma disappeared. After a while, the high nganga called the crocodile and the mboma back, and said: "Approach, that we may form an alliance". He beat kimpanzingila and together the snake and the crocodile came up to him. The high nganga addressed them as follows: "To you, crocodile, I say: now we have formed an alliance. Should a female ndoki, or a male ndoki come with designs on our lives, attack him and push him under the thickets of Mafubu. May he perish, whether he comes in the

guise of an owl, an eagle, a leopard, a mbamba snake,<sup>1</sup> a nduuna snake, a gazelle, a brook cat, a nkabi antelope, a mfuki,<sup>2</sup> a lubaki bird<sup>3</sup> or of any other animal that he sends to steal our souls; attack and kill it. When the time has come for me to be uprooted (die), stay with him (the novice) who has been consecrated for life. When you yourself are uprooted, may you return to the river whence you came. May you walk ahead of us and when we are at war, turn aside the bullets, in alliance with Kengele (a war nkisi)". To the mboma he said: "You who are long-lived, stretch our span of life. Wrap yourself around anyone who threatens our lives". Again he beat kimpanzingila and together the animals dived back. Again he beat kimpanzingila and they returned. He instructed them carefully not to harm those who came to fetch water or to fish, "but should anyone come to bewitch (like a ndoki) or spy on our lives, pull hard". Thereupon they disappeared again.

MENDONDA lived a long, long time and so did his wife. When he died, the crocodile disappeared and heavy rains fell for three days. The crocodile followed the rain down to the river, accompanied, it is believed, by MENDONDA.

Another pool is named for the paramount chief MEMBUKU MBANGALA, who consecrated himself to Simbi (a war nkisi) and to Kinkoko (the nkisi of property) there. The fame of this old chief had spread wide and far. Like the initiation into kindoki, the consecration to kinkoko is a secret ceremony. This chief consecrated himself on the brink of the pool, by tearing a strip of blue cloth from the roll he had brought along and throwing it into the water. The strip was transformed into a big bale of cloth, sufficient for all his trading to the end of his days. As the strip fell into the pool, the water turned an opaque blue and its contents were hidden from all eyes. From then on and forever more, it was forbidden to fish the pool with nets and neither were the women allowed to yaba (bail it dry). The paramount chief hid his life in the pool and lived to a ripe old age. He became very ugly towards the end and his body was covered with something resembling itch-mites. He was called a water simbi. He did not die until he was besprinkled with water from the pool. That very day the pool broke up into two parts. The larger part was feared by all as the dwelling of the dead MEMBUKU MBANGALA. Many rich chiefs have since hidden their souls in this pool to ensure a long life. They even came from distant parts to do so, as the bandoki were unable to find souls hidden outside their territory.

The pool Mentulu derives its name from the fact that the local simbi made its voice heard with a sound like a cracked ntutu calabash. The paramount chief ME MPOONZU HONZO hid his soul here.

The pool of MWIMBU NYALU houses basimbi with a dislike of children. Hence, mothers are forbidden to take their children to these parts.

One pool is called ME NTAMBA for a chief who fell gravely ill there and almost died. Day by day older and younger people died. At length, the nganga of nkisi Nkondi was summoned. He fell into ecstasy before the chief, whose name was bestowed on the sculpture. The chief

<sup>1</sup> The mbamba is also called nduuna or kanza.

<sup>2</sup> A species of mongoose.

<sup>3</sup> A hawk or other bird of prey.



consecrated himself to the sculpture and, having hidden his soul in it, he lived a long, long time.

The pool of MFUNI MAMBA is the simbi of the birds. When the rainy season is almost at an end, all birds flock together here and for three days they build their nests. During those three days, the rain never stops. This pool inspires great terror.

The waterfall known as Mabembe (pigeons) has twenty caves, created by Mpulu Buzi. He has twenty-nine children there. At the slope of the falls, which is called Nlombi, there are two very deep pools where basimbi dwell. Anyone who dives into these pools pays with his life. People hide their souls in these falls and in the pools, for safekeeping by the basimbi. The Mabembe falls are white, as though its rocks had been painted with chalk, alternating with emerald green and black rocks. Fifteen of its caves are inhabited by porcupines. The basimbi have a great liking for porcupines.

Mbulungu is a famous water that houses powerful basimbi, created by Mpulu Buzi. In the middle of this water, near Mpelo, a heavy rock rises round and smooth into the air, its top covered with creepers that are the clothes Mpulu Buzi dressed them in. All the cliffs projecting from the water are black. Beyond Mpelo, at Nlambi, there are five caves. The fifth, which is called the smoking-pipe, contains a big water-pool.

The pool of Bundi, surrounded by big rocks, is a terrifying place. Three banganga have consecrated themselves to it. The first to do so was NTEMBILA MBUKA. The name of the simbi was Matengukidi, meaning "powerful in preventing, dissolving (tenguka) war". At the consecration ceremony, he placed saliva, nails and hairs, and in addition the heads of four snakes, in a round stone wound with creepers. The snake heads came from a ndimba, a nduuna, a buta and a mboma. As the stone was thrown into the water, the four snakes appeared. Each in turn licked first the high nganga and then the novice on the forehead. First came the ndimba, then the nduuna, followed by the buta and finally the mboma. The mboma is included to ensure that the nganga's span of life will be long, just as the snake spans a long stretch. The high nganga instructed the four snakes: "Protect the life of your master (the novice). You have guns. Should a female ndoki or a male ndoki come to steal his life, cleave him in two. If he flees and escapes you, may he perish. May no cure save him from death." Having said this, the high nganga threw a stone into the pool. The snakes dived into the water and a heavy rain lashed down.

The second nganga was ME NZUDI, who came from a distant country to hide his life in the Bundi pool. He lived very long. Once, in battle, he was hit in the mouth by a bullet. The hole made by the bullet healed along the edges, but did not close. When he was eating soup, some of it ran out through the hole. When he spoke, saliva escaped the same way. He continued warring and lived to a ripe old age.

The third nganga was MALWANGA. He too came from a far-away country to hide his life in the pool. When all three banganga were dead, this pool divided into three parts, as the lives of the banganga were transformed into water basimbi.

Kalembo (unable) is the name of waterfalls which Nzambi has been unable to bring together. In the falls' are twelve mountains and twelve pools. The water trickles

slowly from the first pool into the second one. Basimbi live here with herds of porcupines, their domestic animals. If people hunt porcupines and they escape to this water, they may continue to hunt them.

Bikungu (from kunga, to wail) is a waterfall near Kalembo. The basimbi of these falls are brothers, the eldest living at Bikungu. They parted because they wanted to build separate villages. A stranger wails (kunga) at his first sight of these falls, as they are something of a wonder. The water descends from one pool over flat rocks, so smooth as to permit no ascent, down another rock into a cave, finally rushing into the third pool. The water is very clear and beautiful.

The country is called Vunda (rest), because the basimbi, wandering about in search of a home after having left the sea, finally settled there. Mpulu Buzi too wanders around in these parts to see if the basimbi have remained in their settlements. All basimbi are called Bimena-mena bya mena mpangu ye nlongo, meaning "the rooted (nobody can remove them) that parted that day to remain consecrated forever". The banganga were not allowed to visit these parts.

The waterfall Lwami received its name as the basimbi fell out with each other, one simbi defeating four others, which then fled to other waters. The laments and cries (lwami) that were heard from the waterfall at the time gave it its name. The waterfall where the four escaped basimbi settled, was called Mbutani (from butana, to multiply). The chiefs of the country hid their souls there, became basimbi and associated with bandoki.

The accounts of waters, caves, stones and rocks inhabited by basimbi are innumerable. In addition to these places, they may also dwell in mountains, woods and plains.

The mountain Ngunga Nlembo rises straight into the sky. It has thirty-six peaks, one right opposite the other. All house basimbi, created by Mpulu Buzi. There are only matadi ma zinkoko in these mountains.

Kyavulu, near Vungu, is a mountain crest where Mpulu Buzi rested on his way inland from the sea, to visit his younger brothers.

The mountain Kalembo Nzambi has six peaks surrounding a plateau called Va Kalembo Nzambi, meaning "where one cannot meet Nzambi".

The mountain Lunzi kya ngo (the soul of the leopard) is immense. From a distance, it looks like a resting leopard. In Kimongo it is called the mountain of chieftainship and glory, for it is a leopard that does not hide.

Kintadi is another huge mountain. On its summit stand eight stones. The old people called them the eight basimbi erected by Nzambi, that are impossible to budge.

The mountain Saka consists of only black stones and black soil. Mpulu Buzi rubbed them with charcoal. On the mountain top, the leopard has stepped on the stones and left its spots on them. Hence the summit is called "the leopard's steps on the top". Basimbi dwell there. The mountain is the glory of the people of the country and the boast of children and grandchildren.

The mountain Tadi (the rock) has stones like chests, in which the basimbi hide their

possessions. The basimbi live under the stones with their domestic porcupines. The power of the basimbi is concentrated on Tadi. Mpulu Buzi rested there nine nsona days.<sup>1</sup>

On the mountain Nsangu (history) all basimbi congregated. Mpulu Buzi walks the mountain to meet his followers and renew their trust in him after his long absence from their midst.

The mountain Nzingu-nzingu (around) is called so, because Mpulu Buzi wandered around there for forty-two nsona days. As a result, the mountain looked like a mat covered with manyongo patterns. The local basimbi live underground. They like people and never quarrel with them.

The mountain Ngo nuni (eagle) is tremendously high. Its summit is crowned by a peak rising high into the sky. From this point, every mountain in the country can be seen. Straight across stands the mountain Nkodo Masu with its faces. The mountain derives its name from the fact that it is the resting-place of the eagle. Those who were born in the country, say: "I am crowned with the eagle. The leopard is quickly killed, but the eagle lives forever". Children and grandchildren may tread the mountain, but death is the penalty for any mfumu of the mvila setting his foot there.

On Nkodo Masu, two big rocks rising high into the air, basimbi live in a vast and frightening cave, with porcupines, sloth-monkeys (binkombo), birds and other animals climbing upwards. Nkodu Masu is the chief of the ba Mangundazi, because no other basimbi possess such rocks. His children are black, white or red. Water streams from all cavities.

The mountain Nkala Mbumba derives its name from the fact that Mbumba's nganga reigned supreme there, as it was there that nkisi Mbumba Bingu first appeared. Banganga of other minkisi are not allowed on the mountain. The children and grandchildren of the country boast: "Eh, I come from the mountain Nkala Mbumba, where father Navunda was the greatest. His power was unsurpassed. He was the greatest of the basimbi. He was the greatest of mountains and waters. All basimbi went to him for water".

A chief inheriting the kingdom of Vunda must see the mountain Ludi in this country before his investiture, to enable him to judge (ludika) lawsuits with impartiality. If a chief judges unfairly, he is told: "Ah, yaaya, go and look at the Ludi mountain, that your decisions may become just".

The mountain Lunyamba is the home of Mbalala, the nkisi of the ruling power. No member of the mvila may go there. The mountain lies in the woods and four mbula (very tall trees) stand on it. It is a holy shrine, where no one may defecate or urinate. In the old days, the penalty for such an offence was beheading or, alternatively, payment of one slave.

Mbata Masala is a beautiful plain near the village of the ntinu. The basimbi dwelling under the ground here dislike people. When people settled here in the old days, there were many deaths. One day, they startled a nsuma antelope out of its hiding-place by the

<sup>1</sup> One of the days in the Kongo four-day week.

road to the village, and sent the dogs after it. When they were ordered into the grass, one of the dogs was transformed into a nsuma antelope. When it was hunted, it barked like a dog. After this miracle, no more people settled in the plain.

Minkisi are usually endowed with the power and strength of a nkuyu spirit. In the south (Mayombe), however, some minkisi, such as Simbi, Mbenza and Nkita, embody the power of a simbi spirit. It is said: "A simbi is a simbi and not a nkuyu, because bankuyu are people who died from nkasa." In the far north, basimbi are usually called bankita.

The basimbi have a mvila of their own, with the motto: "Kimena-mena kyamena mpangu ye nlongo". They are the rooted, immovable simbi stones, or rocks of the weirdest shapes, created by Nzambi Mpungu and instilled with power and strength by Mpulu Bunzi when he came from the sea, with his retinue carrying ngong-gong, ngoma and tangala drums.

There are other basimbi who dwell in springs, rapids, pools, mountains and woods. Some of these have also been adopted as bakisi. The search for a simbi on behalf of a nkisi is conducted along similar lines as the capture of a nkuyu for incorporation with a nkisi. The nganga of Mbenza, for instance, tracks down a simbi for his nkisi by smell divination and ecstatic trances. Nganga Mbenza, accompanied by several other banganga who have assembled this nkisi, walks ahead with the ndungu drum. When they arrive at a spur of the forest, the others must follow the nganga's search from the sounds of the drum. The nganga himself may not say a word until he has found the bisimbi. Then he calls out: "Cye, cye, cye-hi-hi-hi. Come and line up, come quickly, quickly now." On hearing this, the ngudi a nganga and some others walk over to the spot where the bisimbi have been found. The people of the village are summoned to bring the means for consecrating the bisimbi. It turns out to be an old hoe, which the people did not know before. They beat the drum and sing:

"Eh, the father of Lumoni (simbi)  
Has gone to see the Creator (of the nkisi), Mother  
Eh, the nganga of Mpanzu  
Both are still here."

All the birds in the wood remain silent, as the basimbi are being consecrated. Then it is said: "This being traces its origin from the beginning of the world, it will last forever and no one can ever change it."

## Ancestor Cult

The ancestor cult is based upon the power that is ascribed to the father in relation to his children, for on account of the *mvila* system he does not, in contradistinction to the mother, rule them. Instead, he has his paternal right (*kitaata*), which he can assert in several ways. If the father dies, the paternal right survives. In consequence of the prevailing notions of the life after this also the deceased father and others of his *kanda* are accounted among those having paternal right, and they should therefore be made objects for the cult and the sacrificial gifts due to them. Those having paternal right are often referred to as lumbar or "small-of-the-back" fathers (*mase ma luketo*), i.e. fathers from whose loins or lumbar region the child has been born. The term father (*taata*) may otherwise according to the terminology of the *mvila* system refer to many others, including even women, in the father's *kanda*.

The paternal right consists in the child's obligation, as soon as it is grown up, to revere and honour the father throughout the whole of its remaining life, above all through gifts. A man gives to the father, the father's *kanda* and deceased members of the latter a mug of his palm wine and, of the game he kills, "the heart". The daughter remembers them with "a handful" of peanuts or a pot of cooked food. The father in his turn rewards the child with a gift of acknowledgement (*matondo*), a piece of cloth etc. and a blessing.

The deceased father and the forefathers, especially the powerful heads of the *kanda*, must also be remembered. This remembrance generally takes the form of a mug of palm wine that is poured out at the burial place where the most recently deceased lie buried. So that the deceased shall not be forgotten, the palm wine is prepared in the vicinity of the burial place. Among certain northern tribes a small house is erected over the grave of the deceased, which is then located in the village or somewhere nearby. If images of the forefathers are made and kept in the homes or in houses specially erected for the purpose, then palm wine is poured into them as a sacrificial gift. A small portion of any game that is killed and a little cooked food are likewise placed there as a sacrifice. In the north also a little elevated clay mound is separated off in the living room. Under this a small animal has been placed, in whose shape one of the deceased has revealed himself. In a semicircle in the clay are also placed palm seeds representing other ancestors. The seeds have been thrust into the clay by a *nganga*, in order to ensure that the right ancestors have been chosen.

Here palm wine is offered up and prayers are said. There are also specially erected ancestor houses built of clay and provided with a fine grass thatch. A door that is pulled up like a Venetian blind covers the entrance. The floor is even and smooth. In these houses there is only a mug with a hole in it, into which palm wine is poured as a thanksgiving sacrifice. There are no graves in such houses.

The children may complain to the deceased forefathers if their father or any other member of his kanda should forbid them e.g. to eat of his nsafu-tree or to tap wine from his palms and so forth.

In such cases the children go to the graves of the deceased and complain to the departed of the way in which they are tormented by those whom the latter have left behind. They say: "Ever since you, taata, went from me, they revile me. I am not allowed to touch the nsafu-trees nor to tap palm wine in the grove. I have spoken of this to your fathers. See to this yourselves, you fathers!"

While the children are lamenting they must crouch down at the grave and clap their hands (kunda) to express their thanks. After this they return home again. They may also take palm wine with them and pour it out on the grave, and roll about on the earth of the grave to get a blessing. If anyone stands in a criminal relation to the father or the forefathers, the oldest member of the kanda or its head must plead the case of the son or daughter.

As soon as the deceased have heard the complaint of the children they manifest themselves in dreams and punish those who torment their children. The departed may even take revenge by sending sickness and death.

The children are entitled to a portion of their deceased father's shroud as a memento (mavemba) and as a sign of the father's blessing. They keep this all their lives as a relic. The father's children have the right to enter the house of mourning, to shroud the corpse as they like and to keep guard to see that no fowls or other animals hop over it, for if this happens the animal must be killed.

The children are entitled to receive gifts and blessings from their deceased father, which implies that they will then have success in all their work. If therefore anyone finds that he is not succeeding, he goes to his father's kanda, first to the living and then to those who have died and are buried.

If a daughter survives her father and marries, but does not become pregnant, it is feared that some one of the father's relatives may be the cause of this. The persons in question are then paid a visit and requested to spit their spittle (pfu) at her and to tie a blade of lunyanga or kimbanzya grass round her arm or leg. If this is of no avail the daughter is taken to the grave mounds where the head men of the kanda are buried. She may not go there alone. At the grave they say: "This your daughter comes to beg for mercy, that you may let life pass over to her, for she has long since moved into her home, but she cannot conceive any foetus. Give over your wrath. She has brought with her palm wine and a big pot of yuma, a lot of poultry and ducks in order to become fruitful. Have you crooked your necks (been angry)? Receive this gift and lift up your heads (be mild)."

They then pour out a little palm wine over each one of the grave mounds and say: "The

one who gave birth to this child is your own child. If you now want flesh, then give your deceased child flesh and he will thank you." The forefathers are in other words to give permission to the daughter's deceased father to give his daughter "flesh", i.e. bless her with happiness and fertility. This is repeated at each grave, and finally they go to the grave of the daughter's father, so that he may render thanks for the other departed ones having forgiven the child. They pour out a lot of palm wine on the grave and stir up the clay with the palm wine. They take a little of this mixture from each grave and wrap it in a package of leaves which is then placed upon the father's grave.

Much palm wine is then poured out upon the latter and the clay is mixed with that from the other graves. The "medicine" is now smeared on the daughter's brow, temples, shoulders and breasts. Then a couple of lines are drawn from the navel to the breasts and from the navel round about the hips, down the legs and round the ankles.

They call upon several of the deceased, for some of them have much ndoki magic and try to work mischief by preventing fertility. As some of the departed are very good they are able to prevail upon their deceased fellows to put aside their magic and instead to bless the child if it has begged for mercy and made suitable sacrifices.

Deceased fathers in a kanda have fellowship with the living, and the latter must therefore take the clay and smear it on the child, for it is through the grave-earth that the fellowship is transmitted from one generation to another. A child may consequently only be besmeared with earth (kitoto) from graves belonging to the father's kanda.

One of the duties entailed in the ancestor cult is carefully to hack away the grass from the grave mounds, so that a grass fire may not sweep over them. After the hacking operation palm wine is poured on the graves as a sacrificial offer and with prayers for a blessing. Several salvoes are fired, too, in honour of the deceased.

The origin of the ancestor cult is as a matter of fact to seek in the kitaata, paternal power, that the father is entitled to exercise if he is not respected and does not receive the gifts and the homage that are due to him.

The "power" is ascribed to the father for the sake of the act of begetting and for the many difficulties to which he may be exposed during the pregnancy, for this has in itself a certain power which may prove fatal for as well the man as for his wife.

Kitaata is manifested in the ability to "close" (bindika), i.e. to make a person impotent, "deprived of power" or bewitched, so that he or she becomes "closed", "bound", or "sick in misfortune", i.e. cursed. This state is in fact regarded as a sickness.

If the father considers himself called upon to exercise his power he does this in one of three ways: by wishing the child evil; by pronouncing a secret, mild curse or one known to the child; or by pronouncing a curse on the child in its presence and in the presence of the kanda.

If the father or someone acting in his stead finds that the son has procured a gun and is killing game without handing over "the heart", he says to himself: "He shall see! He shall see!"

If the son taps palm wine without presenting a mug to the father, if he makes a good



Fig. 8. Sculptures of ancestors: a, Bemba in Kolo (Laman 632); b, Bemba in Kolo (Laman 523).

profit as a trader but omits to give the father a piece of cloth, or if the daughter gets a good harvest and forgets to give her father a handful of peanuts, then the latter says: "May the palm wine peter out! May his trade succeed no more! May her harvest shrink and be no more successful!"

The son or the daughter may perhaps persist in denying the father his right although they know his disposition. But then the father (or someone acting in his stead) may pronounce a mild curse when the child is present or in its absence. He says: "Am I then not your father nanzambi mpungu?" (i.e. as a god, god-man and not as an animal). "But if I am your father, shoot bucks, shoot does, get yourself possessions from above and from below!" ("if you can" being understood). He then wipes his armpits, stretches out his hands and blows towards the son.



A still severer punishment is to "bind" the son with a kundu spell which may become a curse. This is done only when the son is born of a mother who has been bought or inherited and is thus accounted as belonging to the father's kanda and possessions. Neither anything of this kind nor magic (kindoki) can hurt anyone who is of another mvila. Nor can the dead hurt anyone who is not a member of the mvila.

The threat of a curse is as a rule proclaimed by the head men of makanda or by the chiefs. Kitaata then passes over to these, as well for the kinship as for the proprietorship and the chieftainship. This power is respected in the very highest degree if the one who has pronounced the curse dies. The curse is, however, frequently of a provisional nature, and if the child does what the father requires of it the curse is turned into blessing.

If the father wants to curse a son the whole kanda is summoned besides the son in question. The father lightly strikes his loin-cloth, scrapes his foot in the ashes or whets his knife, meantime pronouncing the curse. He also tears off a bit of his loin-cloth, cuts off a little hair from his head, armpits and pubic region and says: "Who has given birth to you? Am I not your father? Are you not from my loins? Have I not begotten you? Shoot bucks, shoot does, get yourself possessions from above and below! So, you my child, your mother, not I, gave birth to you, so be it then. But since I have given you birth, when you are about to take your gun again, leema yanduka!" (get hot, hot in the heart). "Your pigs, poultry and goats shall not flourish, kokolo!" (rubbing his rump on the earth or the mat, moving forward a little the while). This is called koka kandu (drag, scrape kandu) and constitutes a declaration on oath of what one has said.

If a daughter is cursed she is made infertile.

Anyone afflicted in this way is pursued by misfortune, becomes emaciated, falls ill and is broken down. His kanda gets hold of a smeller-out to find whether it is a nkisi, ndoki, nkuyu-spirit, father or ancestor who has cursed him. If it is the father the child is told to go to him to be released from the curse, receive happiness and recover his health by having kimbanzya grass tied round him.

The son then goes to the father, taking with him a large calabash of palm wine, and tells him what the smeller-out has said. The father replies: "Yes, I am angry with you, but come back on such and such a day." The son comes, this time saying: "My father, on account of the sickness I have got (properly: been closed with) I cannot shoot any game, my domestic animals are not flourishing any more, and so forth, and I want now to be dressed kimbanzya" (for absolution). The father replies: "Yes, I am angry with you, since you forget me. Never do I get the heart when you shoot an animal. Nor have I received any palm wine, and you do not tell me what my enemies say about me; but let be. Come early to-morrow morning at daybreak, and you shall be clad in kimbanzya and receive happiness." This can only be received early in the morning.

When the son comes the father meets him poorly clad on the road leading to the village. There they turn their backs to each other and the father ties the kimbanzya grass firmly on the son's back, saying: "I am your father nanzambi mpungu, shoot bucks, shoot does. I am no longer angry, get yourself possessions from above and from below". They then

turn towards each other and the father takes his son's hands and guides them up to his armpits, stretching out his hands and spitting (i.e. by way of blessing) at the son, who must then jump up and down two or three times as a sign that he is forgiven. The father may even take a bit of kola nut, chew it up, spit it out and give it to the son to eat. The father also says: "But above the tongue I said it. I did not say it under the tongue. Shoot, I have no more evil intentions."

If the curse is upon a daughter, the ceremonies are roughly the same.

If the curse refers only to the hunt, the father takes the son's gun, loads it with gunpowder and ball and gives powder and balls to the son. With these balls the son soon shoots an animal, and he then gives the father "the heart".

If the father has sealed his curse with a kandu declaration, the son is aware of the fact. If the threat of a curse is pronounced in old age or just before death, however, the consequences are not apparent until after the father's decease. If the son desires the curse to be rescinded in this case, someone must be called after the deceased. As a rule, the father's name is then given to a boy. The latter takes a hoe, ties about the handle a ring of ordinary thatching grass, stands with his legs apart, hacking thus between his legs, and says: "I am your father nanzambi mpungu, shoot bucks, shoot does, nothing cursed, nothing cursed for you". He repeats this twice more. In this way the curse is rescinded.

If the smellers-out have said that the ancestors are the cause of the family's misfortunes, because they have not been revered and obeyed, then the people go to the graves, hack away all the weeds and are at pains to make them as fine as possible.

The oldest member of the kanda steps forward to give a speech to all those assembled, i.e. to the children who are born of this loin (=direct descendants), the grandchildren and all the members of the kanda where they are gathered together "like the teeth in the mouth of the swine" (i.e. all without exception).

The oldest slaughters the pig that has been brought along and pours some of its blood first upon the graves of the eldest, then upon those of the younger ones, the slaves and the children. As he pours out the blood he says, for instance: "Thou, father LUNDAKI, and SAMBA, father of MAMYUNDU, and you fathers and mothers, grandchildren and children in the kanda and children of slaves — all you who have gone to the grave before, calm your minds, sink your hearts (be mild), do not lift your hearts to zeal (wrath), nor yet your eyes. Do not come hither to nseke mpanga (this created land), for when you come to take us, who shall then look after our sisters, mothers, grandchildren and children whom you have left? Who will help them? Oh you fathers and mothers, do not so, let us become strong and completely sound and vigorous. Let us increase, let our wives give birth to healthy and able children and so forth."

"You, our fathers and chiefs, eat the pig's blood, but do not eat ours, the blood of humans, let us go out on the moors and shoot our animals, bucks and does, or in our trading lavish much upon us, so that we may get possessions with which to help our kanda. Oh you, the eldest and you, the younger, go out on the moors, the moors and the moors, to the side, to the side and to the side (but not in the village), for how should we behave otherwise?"

All of you, blow upon (bless) us, give us soul (life) and arms (with strength), that we may not be tormented with distress like this. Others of your children have come to be "bathed by the earth" here on the graves of your fathers. Strengthen these now, that they may give birth to their grandchildren and awaken your names. You grandchildren, hear now your grandchildren who have come to be "bathed with the earth", that they may get a blessing. Do not close us. If we sell the pigs, may the sale be successful. If we sell goats, may it succeed. If we are to cure the sick with our nkisi, may it succeed, that we may get abundance of possessions and help our family line. Have mercy on us, you mothers, you fathers, you chiefs, you banganga. We fall down like the goat. We bend our knees like the kid. Be merciful to us!"

Then palm wine is poured out on the graves, and the head man of the kanda must besmear children and grandchildren with tobe (kitoto), the grave-earth upon which the palm wine has been poured. The head man is smeared with tobe by the children. All fall down at the graves and pay homage (as if before a great chief). The blood of the pig is poured out on the graves, into the mugs (with holes in the bottom) and the barrels of the guns on the graves. Sometimes volleys of shots are fired. Before the people return to their village they have requested the old ones to tell the younger ones and the slaves not to be hanging about in the village.

If a hunt is crowned with success, blood from the game is poured out on the graves of the chiefs and the most powerful persons. If anyone has had success in his trading he buys a hen or some poultry and sacrifices these, and has the blood poured out on the graves of the eldest. A daughter will act in a like manner if she has been successful in her work, so that everyone in the sequel may be blessed with good fortune and luck.

If the fathers wish to show their gratitude they may appear in dreams to the children and give them indications as to where they may find their gifts, e.g. cloth, a goat or a pig. But it is strictly forbidden to divulge this to outsiders, for then everything will vanish. The deceased father goes as it were in and out through the breath, yet not as a male figure, but in another form, when he wishes to bless the child with something. He may also reveal himself in the form of an animal, such as e.g. a bonga-lizard or a frog in the vicinity of the grave. If a child passes the grave of its fathers it clears its throat and says: "E-ee, I your child pass by here". The fathers warm themselves in the sunshine by assuming such a shape, and such animals may thus not be injured. The deceased may also reveal themselves as kituzi-animals with human souls, as mvudi-antelopes, wild pigs, elephants, buffaloes and crocodiles etc. Such an animal, which may be recognized from the fact that it is wearing some ornament or garment, or is able to speak, may not be shot. If a hunter should do so, his gun will blow up. When such an animal shows itself a child or grandchild will always die within a short time.

Those most recently deceased are as a rule peaceful and quiet; sometimes, however, they reveal themselves through occult phenomena. They frighten the people in the village by knocking and banging at the walls, or by throwing stones at the houses, by shooing and dragging noises on the roof, as if some heavy object were being dragged over it, by loud

whistling sounds, growling and mumbling on roads and near rubbish heaps and so forth. Such deceased persons are not worshipped; the people conjure them with nloka-curses by some great nkisi, such as e.g. Nkondi, Nsansi or Ngoliela, to leave the village. If all is of no avail, they open the grave and burn the corpse.

It sometimes happens that one of the deceased great wishes to manifest himself to help or injure the living, for example by being admitted as a nkisi or nkuyu-spirit and kept in some vessel or in some wooden sculpture.

In order to capture such an ancestral nkuyu-spirit, a nganga nkuyu, who has power over them, must be summoned.

In the beautiful little sculptures among the Bembe and other tribes such a nkuyu-spirit has been captured and fixed with medicine and resin. The spirit has been incorporated with the sculpture, which is always referred to as nkuyu. It becomes a protective nkuyu which is carried in a nkutu-bag, in a basket or the like, in order with its presence to cause uneasiness and premonition in the heart of the owner if any danger threatens.

A nkuyu-spirit can also be captured if nganga nkuyu gets hold of e.g. a ring or a leopard's tooth that the deceased has worn, or of some object at the grave. Nganga nkuyu may for example take the mug on the grave from which the deceased has drunk and put into this the object they have found together with clay from the grave, pressing it down hard on the bottom. Further, two hollow stalks of grass with medicine are put into the mug, to prevent the spirit from escaping. The mug with the spirit is given to the one who has dreamed of the deceased and on this account had a great fright or fallen ill. The mug is sacred and, like nkisi, the object of certain prohibitions. The person who has been given the mug must take it with him wherever he goes. From this mug he must drink palm wine. If he has not observed the prohibitions he is unable to lift the mug and drink out of it. But when a new day dawns it does not matter, for this has nothing to do with the sins of darkness. Another rule lays it down that as soon as the owner wishes to drink palm wine he must first give the spirit a drink, for otherwise the latter will be angry. If the owner eats chicken, he must give the blood to the spirit. It must have one chicken a month. If the spirit flees on account of failure to keep the prohibitions, the owner of the mug falls seriously ill and may even die suddenly.

In this way the power of the spirit is "closed"; and by honouring it and sacrificing to it one gains its favour, so that instead of being injured one is blessed with possessions and good fortune in everything one undertakes.

The nkuyu-spirit is no nkisi, despite the fact that a nganga has been responsible for its capture.

But there is an ancestral nkisi which in certain places is referred to as Lemba and in others as Bunzi; like Funza, it is a bringer of good fortune for those who obey its behests.

The one who is to compose Lemba must know his clan name and receive it from a nganga in the same clan. It costs a great deal to compose Lemba, but he bestows possessions, health and strength upon his nganga. If Lemba is slighted, on the other hand, he causes sickness;

the person thus afflicted becomes uneasy, does not want to settle in one place, but moves now here now there. This is the work of the fathers.

The person who falls ill must drink from Lemba's pot to be cured. One who is a Lemba initiate always wears the Lemba ring as a badge by which he may be recognized.

A declaration on oath is often made by the dead, e.g. *widi taata*, *widi taata ami* (by my deceased father). Such a declaration may also be made by the mother, though she does not play any great rôle in connection with ancestor worship. In this case the oath has e.g. the following wording: *widi ngwa ami* (by my deceased mother).

*Widi taata* may also be an exclamation of respect, joy and surprise in case of any remarkable success. If the deceased parents are the most precious and sacred subjects to swear by, it implies also the gravest conceivable offence and insult to ejaculate, for example in a quarrel: *widi ngwa aku* (by your dead mother).

This form of ancestor worship is called *ngyobodolo a tobe (a kitoto) kwa bataata* or *bamataata*, i.e. bathing with earth from the ancestral graves. The latter is the medium between the living and the dead. The grave-earth is one with the person who is buried there. He has not died (been annihilated), but is living in "the world of bliss". Earth from the grave therefore bestows life, health and prosperity.

There is no talk of mother-power in the sense here referred to, for the children of course belong to her, and she tries to be honoured and obeyed in other ways than the father.

Her brother, the chief in the *kanda*, may, however, try to "close" a member of the *kanda* who does not meet his obligations. If, for instance, a person has got a gun and shot several smaller animals that he has shared with the members of his family in the *kanda*, and then kills a buffalo and sells the meat in order to get money, the others in the *kanda* say: "When you sell the meat, is the gun then your own?" He: "Eh, with whom have I then bought the gun?" They: "Oh ho! We imagine that it is ours, the *kanda's*. So it is yours. You own it! But *bote fyole*, if, when you bought it, if it was not to shoot animals for eating. When you go selling our meat, which is for eating, *bote fyole*, then you don't belong to this *kanda*. But if you do belong to it, then you must no more shoot even a shrew-mouse, *ba kokolo* (wiping the rump on the ground or the hand on the loin-cloth or the like as a sign of declaration on oath), burn, have bad luck! Perhaps we do not belong to your *kanda*. But if we do, then burn, have bad luck! You shall not shoot buck, nor doe, burn, have bad luck!"

## CHAPTER VII

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### Nzambi

Nzambi is identical with Chambi, the name which the ancestors of the Kongo retained when they left their country Chari in Southern Sudan. The same name has been retained by various peoples who wandered southwards about the same time, for instance the Teke (Nzaami) and the Herero (Ndjambi). The concept of Nzambi among the Kongo probably owes much to the influence of the early Catholic missions. Still, considering the indigenous civilization, in particular that of the Sundi in the north, existing in STANLEY's days, the native conception of Nzambi may be defined as follows:

Greater than minkisi, simbi spirits, bandoki and all others is Nzambi, also called Nzambi Mpungu (the great Nzambi), Mpungu nene (the great Mpungu), Mayanama (he who towers above, is superior to all).

All that the earth and the sky contain, stars, sun, moon, light, darkness, thunder, lightning, stones, water, fishes and other animals was created by Nzambi and not by any nkisi. This last is significant, considering the prevalence of minkisi, especially Funza and Bunzi, in popular traditions. Thus Funza was regarded as the creator of the foetus in the womb. He could also deform the foetus and hence every woman who was delivered of an abortion approached Funza with sacrifices and prayed for a well-shaped child the next time. Bunzi, on the other hand, was the patron deity of the kanda, mvila and especially of the Sundi. He guarded their welfare and happiness. One of our mission stations is located in the village of Kibunzi, so called because nkisi Bunzi and his nganga once ruled there.

The idea of Creation inspires the comment: "Our heads whirl at the thought of Creation. Consider the palm-tree. Whence came the palm-nut? Certainly, from the palm-tree. Whence came the palm-tree? Certainly, from the palm-nut. But which of them came first? And who came first, man or woman? If woman bore the first man, how did she become pregnant? Did man come from heaven or from earth?" Thus reasoned the old people. The problem bewildered them and left them overwhelmed with wonder. They said: "Truly, Nzambi is wondrous. He acts in the manner of the past (incomprehensibly). He indicated to us hills to live on and good food to eat. He causes beautiful teeth to grow although we were born toothless. But presently they decay and vanish. We are born, are granted happiness and food but for a short while, and so we die. That is the whim of Nzambi".

"Nzambi plays tricks on us, because we cannot see him. A leaf trembles (in dead calm)

but he who causes it is not visible. It cannot be the work of goblins or *minkisi*, it is Nzambi who fools us thus. He manifests himself in the breeze, invisible as the spirits of the dead. Nzambi cannot be seen. He is as the wind, blowing everywhere. He does not dwell in the water nor in the earth."

The old people appear to have ascribed almost universal power to Nzambi, seeing him as the master of every being and every thing, because any unusual occurrence was considered to be the whim of Nzambi, his contrivance.

"With regard to sleep, dreams and death Nzambi has again denied us understanding. Consider, when someone is asleep, however, much he dreams and wanders, when he awakens he is always back in the same place (his bed). Death is like sleep. When somebody dies, his spirit roams freely, the shell, the outer body remains, just as in sleep. Look at the snake changing its skin. The skin lies there as if the snake were dead. In the same way we die and join our people in the grave. The shell remains".

Since the people fail to understand what causes illness and death, they have in the first place blamed *bandoki*, *minkisi* and the spirits of the dead. As Nzambi is superior to all these beings and wields the power, he has also been reputed to eat the human race; consequently it is sometimes said: "It is true, Nzambi eats us, but the *bandoki* do the same (i.e. in a secret, supernatural way). They eat the inside of the sick, for behold, the body is wrapped in a shroud. But what do they eat? How do they eat? Truly, they and Nzambi are alike."

To eat means to acquire something or to use something, for instance money in trading, in order to get hold of coveted articles. Thus, to eat debt means to acquire a debt. The State eats the money of the people by taxation. The people lament: "If Nzambi asks for your arm, give it! If he asks for your leg, give it!" (meaning that Nzambi eats, through disease, any limb he chooses). Recalling all those who have died they say: "Nzambi, I am alone!" (Nzambi took the others). When they yawn they may say: "E, Nzambi, I am the only one left. If we could only stay alive, how fortunate we should be. Nzambi, you can also grant good health and see to it that we prosper, but when you contrived for us to die, truly, you aroused our hatred. To eat to satiety is good. Nzambi is good. But death and sorrow is evil. Nzambi is evil".

When disaster strikes, they may rail at Nzambi in disapproval, as they do at their *minkisi*. On the other hand they may sigh meekly: "Nzambi is the greatest, the eldest (noblest), we are but small and weak and inconsiderable. Nzambi is in the sky". One informant comments: "This can also be regarded as a prayer". They may also invoke him to secure revenge or help, for instance if somebody has been wrongfully convicted of being a *ndoki*: "Nzambi, you own your slave, if I am a *ndoki*, you see it. But if I am innocent, then may you, Nzambi, regard these village people and wreak revenge on those who survive me. Sweep, sweep, sweep away, carry them away then" etc. just as great *minkisi* are invoked. After this, the supplicant claps his hands, points them at the sky, gazes intently upwards and blows at his hands. Roughly the same procedure is followed when someone has been illegally deprived of his property or cruelly tormented without giving cause. He may choose to sit down by the crossroads and beseech Nzambi to help and revenge him. When an oath

is sworn, Nzambi may also be invoked: "May Nzambi eat me" (sentence me if I am guilty). May Nzambi destroy my hands, my feet and my nails" (i.e. the entire kanda). The one swearing the oath grips his head and strokes his face with his hands, referring to Nzambi as "Great Sun". Nzambi could also be invoked in blessing: "May Nzambi make you strong and healthy". When recovering from an illness, one may say: "If it had not been for Nzambi I would have died". Because it is Nzambi who grants health, a meeting is arranged with the reservation: "If Nzambi travels with me and brings health, I will come". If someone has been ill for a long time and many banganga have in vain tried to cure him, they may say: "Nzambi did not want him to recover". "Nzambi is the oldest, the greatest. We are but young, we do not have the knowledge to cure the patient. Nzambi lives in the sky, he has chiseled (pointed) the eye-teeth of the dog. His power is great." An eclipse of the sun inspires the comment: "Now Nzambi Mpungu closed his eyes at midday". When the light returns: "Now Nzambi is looking up again." When famine raged: "Now Nzambi has tied up his raffia bag (hardened his heart)". If there is a sudden lull in the conversation, they say: "Nzambi has passed". If someone involuntarily expresses his surprise at another's death or injuries, he adds: "Nzambi, I did not show my surprise" (I did not blame you). "Nzambi cannot be dragged into court, he does as he pleases". "Nzambi walks more than one road" implies that it is unwise to gloat over somebody's death or misfortune, it can happen to anybody. "Should we surpass Nzambi? After all, he is the oldest, his victory is certain". This refers to a game in which two persons blow at each other, and he who blinks first is the loser. Hence a nganga with a sky nkisi says: "I shall die (lose the game) and Nzambi will remain, but I shall travel to the sky".

"The thread of Nzambi is long" is a saying applied to someone who has narrowly escaped death several times. "Nzambi is hollowing out the canoe" is said about someone who is losing his mind. "Laugh at Nzambi but do not laugh at him" (i.e. the one whom Nzambi has struck with infirmities, stupidity, ugliness or some other defect). A nganga may be told: "If you are to cure somebody, do it with the help of Nzambi". When a relative dies, it is often said: "Nzambi has robbed. Nzambi has taken. It is the wish of Nzambi". An incurable disease, such as leprosy, is called Nzambi's illness. "It belongs to Nzambi" is said of anything that is forbidden, poisonous or not to be eaten or touched.

In the old days Nzambi was seldom referred to; people were more concerned with minkisi, bandoki, banganga and spirits. Nevertheless, Nzambi was credited with universal power in the sky and on earth. This power manifests itself in thunder, lightning and death; no nganga is able to prevent it. His power is also evident in the rain, in the growing plants, flowers, trees and fruits, in the birth of man, his growth, his getting a beard and grey hairs.

Nzambi rules supreme and when somebody's wishes are frustrated, he says: "Nzambi rules it. He does not allow me to take it". Still, Nzambi's gifts to his people are manifold, not least in hunting, fishing and agriculture.

Man has only a vague image of Nzambi, as he does not show himself to people. He is different from mankind. His body is white and very clean. His hair is like bimbanzya grass and grows richly. His face is large. Nzambi lives in the sky and hence he cannot visit the



earth. But he observes and watches everything, that nothing may go wrong. His greatness is unequalled. Therefore he is called Nzambi Mpungu (the very great Nzambi).

The lines in the palm of the hand, and even more the deep groove of the spine, are known as Nzambi's roads (nzila), by which he enters man's body, or as Nzambi's writing (wasona). Parents impress this on their children at an early age, and forbid them to draw lines on the ground that cross each other, punishing them severely if they disobey and threatening them with Nzambi's disapproval. He has created the earth and he has not drawn any crosses on it. To draw crosses was by the old people considered as trifling with Nzambi's writing on the human body. The old people sang: "Let us leave drawing to Nzambi". They believed that Nzambi would be moved to punish those who drew crosses.

The old people realized that a famine was a punishment sent by Nzambi. They sighed "Nzambi Mpungu who is in the sky". These sighs were the prayer they addressed to him in their distress, not knowing how to pray properly. The two crimes that Nzambi hated were to brand the innocent as bandoki and to execute the innocent. Where this happened, Nzambi would turn his back on the people and cry. No rain would fall there, but on the side faced by the crying Nzambi there would be rain. When the people realized their wickedness and repented, he would turn his face towards them again and so, one by one, all countries would get rain.

Nzambi's body is like an immovable rock and hence his characteristics cannot be incorporated into any nkisi. He does as he wishes. No one has ever seen him. Nzambi lives in solitude. When the thunder peals, it is said that Nzambi speaks in the sky to his people that live there. This is how they know that Nzambi lives in the sky. The people of the sky are white, tall and very strong. Their hair is soft. They do not know dirt, as their dwelling place is the source of all water. They were created exclusively for the sky and are called the dwellers of the sky. They cannot be conjured or invoked by human beings. Nzambi is supreme and that is why people pronounced curses in his name. How Nzambi and the dwellers of the sky communicate with each other nobody knows. The only occasion on which Nzambi is known to call human beings is when they die and travel to the land of the dead.

The dwellers of the sky are honoured because of their invisibility. Otherwise they resemble human beings in being created by Nzambi and by being mortal, with the difference that they die only to be resurrected after some time. They die (fall asleep) during the dry season and wake again at the beginning of the wet season when the thunder begins to peal. When they die during the dry season and the mbangala season,<sup>1</sup> it means that the one that has climbed a palm-tree remains sitting in it, holding his climbing-hoop in lifeless hands, while another may remain standing lifeless in a plantation, bent over a hoe. All of them, men and women alike, remain lifeless until the first thunder peals across the sky. Then every one of them comes to life again and continues his life and work. For this reason, the old people held the opinion that life in the sky was a good life, seeing that death was not final there.

Nzambi never dies. He lets darkness descend and lets the light return again. He does not

<sup>1</sup> Mbangala is the latter half of the dry season, August to 15 October (LDKF, p 522).

slumber. He puts up the sun every morning and the moon and the stars every evening. This proves that Nzambi neither sleeps nor dies.

Nzambi does not speak to his subjects of the sky in the dry season, when they are dead. But in the *ntombo*<sup>1</sup> season, when the sky becomes overcast, it is said: "Now the people of the sky have come to life, because Nzambi speaks to them. We hear his voice".

Because Nzambi let death come to mankind and also because he gave them *minkisi* against disease and other evils, the people's relationship with him has never been marked by confidence or intimacy, nor has he ever been the object of a proper cult with prayers and sacrifices. Unlike the ancestors, he could obviously not be swayed by repentance, prayer or sacrifice. For this reason, Nzambi has practically disappeared from the native imagination. Their gratitude to him is chiefly expressed by saws. If a people flourishes and multiplies, the saying is: "Nzambi leaves them in peace", "Nzambi protects them". If somebody's crops and property abound, it is said: "Nzambi has blown (his spirit) on his property, Nzambi has come to his aid".

Offerings of thanksgiving or devotion are not made. In fact, gifts to those who are older or more powerful, including Nzambi and the *minkisi*, are made only with ulterior motives. Gifts to the latter are actually fines or payments to persuade them to grant success.

Hunters often quarrel about the ownership of the game they have shot, and if the question cannot be settled by mutual agreement both parties forsake the animal, saying: "Let Nzambi eat it". If a domestic animal has died from natural causes it may also be surrendered to Nzambi.

A Nzambi of sorts was believed to dwell on earth. At Kongo dya Lemba, south of the Congo, for instance, there was a large termite hill that was greatly honoured as a holy place. People went there in times of famine and trembling with terror invoked this Nzambi for rain. A man called *NAMAVITU* was the spokesman for this Nzambi. When he covered the termite hill with red cloth, no rain could fall and there was famine. Then the people went there to ask for rain. They had to bring a large pig, that was slaughtered and cut up on the spot. The entrails and the liquids were strewn over the termite hill and so the rain would again pour down on the earth. The red cloth was removed and replaced by a black one. The place belonged to the *Nlaza* tribe and was the shrine of the ruling power. *NAMAVITU* was co-regent.

Some people believe that man and woman were created in the sky and then lowered to the earth by a thread spun by the *nzambi* spider. On earth they bore a child that soon died. Nzambi told them to place it in a coffin and strictly forbade them to look at the child. The woman did open the coffin, however, and saw that the child had begun to change its skin. Soon afterwards the child died and Nzambi descended to rebuke the woman: "Now you will die for ever. If she had not looked, this would not have been your lot, but you would have changed your skin like the snake".

It is also believed that a person called *TUUKA ZULU* (he who came from the sky), which is

<sup>1</sup> *Ntombo* is the first part of the wet season 15 october—31 december (LDKF, p 797).

synonymous with NAMFUMU A ZULU (the lord of the sky), visited the earth as the envoy of Nzambi. He descended by the lightning. He was short and very dark and brought a large bundle of minkisi. TUUKA ZULU healed the sick and resurrected the dead. Those who had not borne children for a long time recovered the power to give birth. Sometimes he was visible and sometimes he vanished. NAMFUMU A ZULU roamed far and wide. At times, he angered the people and they wanted to shoot him, but the muzzles of their guns were wrenched aside and no shot was fired. Finally, he returned to the sky during a thunderstorm, travelling on a flash of lightning. Later, he became MUKULU or NKULU, the ancestor of the human race. He also brought the seeds of all useful plants.

On earth, Nzambi is represented by the father and the mother who thus have a special authority over their children in teaching them to honour their parents as they should. If a son shows bad tendencies, his father tells him: "E, am I not your father, nzambi mpungu, who created you". If it is the daughter, the mother says: "E, am I not your mother, nzambi mpungu, who has borne you. You will not respect me. Be it so. Take what is above and what is below. Myolo-myolo (good luck). If it is a stick, go around it, if a root, go around it. A child is borne nor raised under kandu prohibitions."

Man, whether alive or dead, is often called nzambi in distinction from animals and other creatures. This has given rise to many odd expressions. About someone who will not hurt a fellow being, it is said: "A peaceful, calm nzambi, that one", meaning that Nzambi created him thus. A woman who is asked if she has any children, may reply: "Yes, I had a couple of nzambi (who died)". The dead are called banzambi za mpungu.

A nganga who tries to diagnose a disease, may say: "He does not have a banzambi za mpungu disease (i.e. a normal human illness) nor a nkisi disease (caused by a nkisi), he has sought his own disease (caused by kindoki)". Nzambi's death is an inexplicable demise, due to the personal intervention of Nzambi. The blind of Nzambi are those who lack kindoki.

Departed close relations are often called nzambi. A dead father is spoken of as: "Nzambi, my late father". Similarly for a child or a wife: "Nzambi, my late child; Nzambi, my late wife". It is also said: "Nzambi eats his likeness" which means that Nzambi eats his own creation. Certain minkisi, carved in imitation of human beings are compared to nzambi-mpungu beings (i.e. human beings with Nzambi characteristics).

For this reason, a corpse may be called nzambi, mpungu or nkulu, because when someone dies, he is transformed into another, invisible being with greater powers and possibilities of the kind that Nzambi possesses. The grave is then called nzambi mpungu's or nkulu's house. The expressions nkulu, nkulu a nzambi refer to the first Nzambi being, the ancestor, from whom customs and manners, and even death have derived their origin.

It is said: "What nkulu Nzambi bequeathed us was death". Of a very accomplished person it is sometimes said: "Look, such a nkulu a Nzambi, or muntu a Nzambi (Nzambi being)". In the Congo and elsewhere the white man has been called by the divine name, indicating that he was regarded as a supernatural being. Paramount chiefs were considered superior to all, and consequently every one who was addressed by them always had to

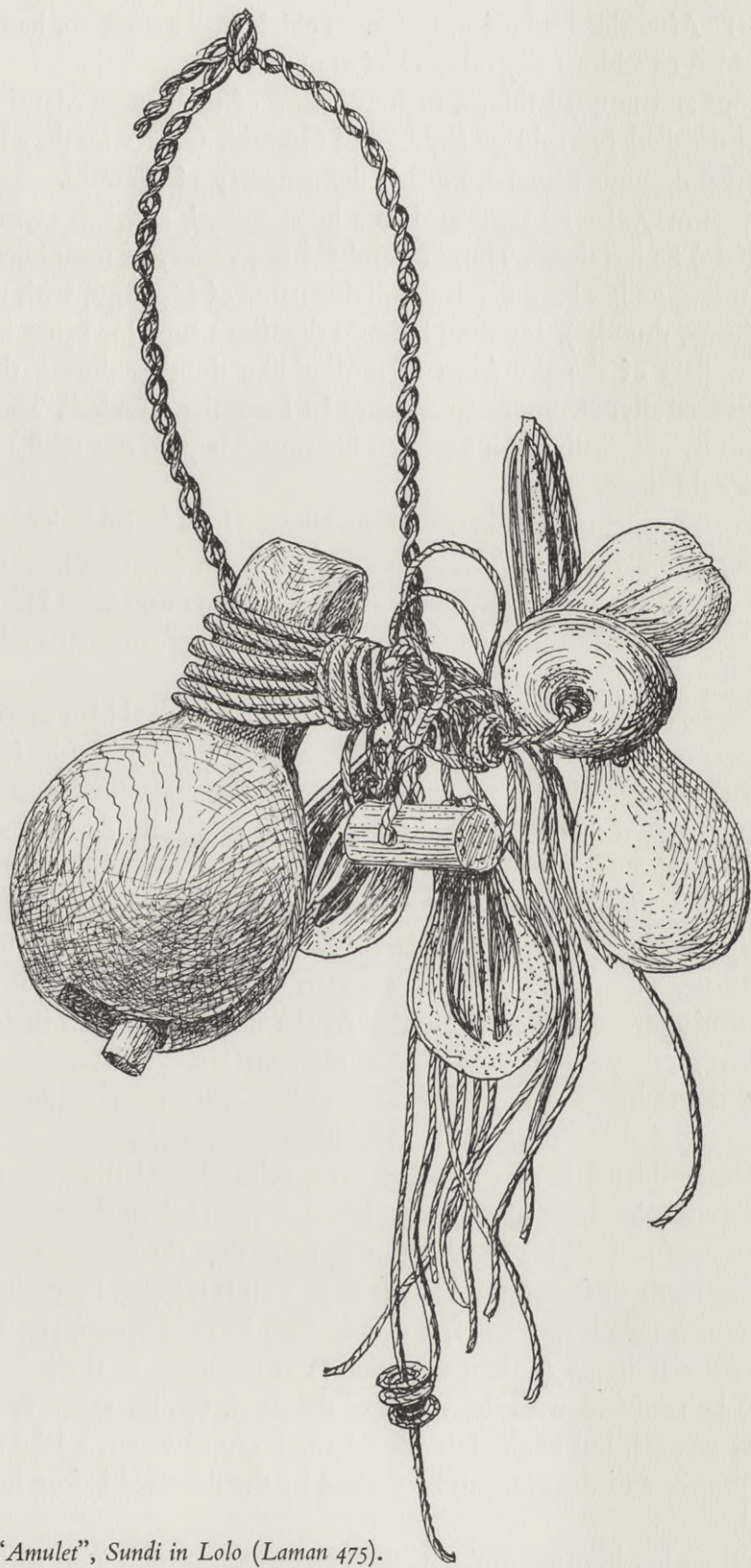


Fig. 9. "Amulet", Sundi in Lolo (Laman 475).

answer: "nzambi!" After the death of a paramount chief, until a successor had been nominated, it was forbidden to address any other chief as nzambi.

Very mysterious and unusual things, such as insects of the genera *Mantia* and *Phasmi*, are sometimes also called Nzambi or children of Nzambi. Otherwise they belong to nkisi Funza. Forbidden poisonous plants are called the property of Nzambi.

The divine name may also be attributed to a huge animal, as when saying: "A nzambi (elephant or buffalo) he has shot". Thus "Nzambi" has a variety of meanings. As master of thunder and lightning he has been given the divine name of Mpungu, with the addition of bidumu (from *duma*, thunder). Mpungu bidumu signifies a superior being in the sky who resurrects the dwellers of the sky from their deathlike slumber during the dry season. Then it is said respectfully: "Mimpungu arises to let loose the thunder". The priests of sky *minkisi* are said to live eternally with Mpungu bidumu. They do not wish to be under the ground. It is too cold there.

Mpungu rules there, whence the rain comes. As Nzambi he is invisible. The name mpungu is also given to a *nganga* who can see *banzambi za mpungu* (the dead), and to those who receive their nkisi from the *basimbi*. Mpungu-nene is synonymous with Nzambi Mpungu. Like Nzambi, Mpungu is often used to signify something large, supernatural or wonderful and likewise for the dead.

The first man is the object of much speculation. He has been called MUKULU or NKULU (the eldest, the ancestor) or, in more northerly parts, MENTETE, MWENTETE (the first) or NZAMBI A NSI (the pioneer). He has often been put on an equal footing with Funza as the creator.

In some Bantu tribes, the terms Mukulu and Nkulu originally designated God. In the Congo, the term may also mean greatness, whence the title Nzambi nkulu, the great Nzambi, the oldest, the noblest. Similarly, the first man was called nkulu Nzambi (the eldest, first-born of Nzambi). Nkulu may also signify a deceased, the plural bakulu meaning the old people, the ancestors. The same properties are ascribed to MENTETE (the first). He taught mankind the manufacture and use of *minkisi*. As the *minkisi* received their strength and power from MENTETE, they are superior to man. MENTETE is said to have created man and to have understood the mystery of life. He is also credited with transforming the dead after burial, so that the crippled and the blind become like other people.

Nsambi or Nansambi nsi is also the first man, who cleared the way for all others. Numerous stories are told about him and his house, a vast rock in the Luwala valley. This Nsambi has been confused with Nzambi Mpungu and thus the former too is believed to have descended to earth to found the human race. This is rejected by tradition, however.

Yet another human race is spoken of, a people with its own moon, sun and sky. Their world is called *nsi a Kalunga* (Kalunga's country) in the deep, in the infernal regions of the earth, not to be confused with the world of the dead. On the coast, Kalunga signifies the ocean and its powers, but in the interior a large body of water, a lake or the Congo. Kalunga is also the river of the dead, to be crossed by the deceased before he arrives in the land of the dead.

If a heinous crime has been committed, the perpetrator is told: "Go to the country of

the sky, go to Kalunga's country, because if you remain here, we will soon meet in court". "Kalunga" is also said in respectful answer to a call.

The expression "nkadi a mpemba" (the supreme ruler of the grave) has been adopted by missionaries to indicate the devil. Nkadi a mpemba is a cruel, dictatorial being. A powerful chief may claim to be a nkadi a mpemba. As an expression of abuse, one may say: "Go to nkadi a mpemba. Go down to your ancestors". There the sun never shines and from this land the dead can never leave to visit people in their dreams.

An old man remembered hearing his uncle, accused of kindoki, praying first to Nzambi and then to Nkadi a mpemba. The uncle extended his hands to Nzambi in the sky, saying: "If I am free (of kindoki) watch over me" (help me pass the nkasa test). Turning to Nkadi a mpemba, he said: "May I die if I am a ndoki". He regarded Nkadi a mpemba as the paramount chief of the bandoki in the land of the dead.

Nzambi Mpungu married a woman who bore him a son. The boy grew up to be very kindhearted to his playmates. One day he followed the others down to the water to swim. When they were ready for the plunge, each of them had to recite his mvila and that of his father. The child of Nzambi Mpungu did not know his father's mvila and became deeply grieved when the others teased him, saying: "E, maybe you were cut from a tree and not born, seeing that you don't know your father's mvila". Thus they provoked him and he was very sad. One day, somebody said to him: "E, look your cane plantation is devoured by a nduutu rodent and you do nothing". He answered; "Let him eat. Do I know the mvila of my father?" Another person reported: "Your pigs have been carried away by the crocodile". He answered: "Let them go. Do I know the mvila of my father?" Yet another came and said: "Look, the thread of the nzambi spider is wound around your face". He: "Be it so. Do I know the mvila of my father?" Another came: "The meat that you brought home has been invaded by bluebottle grubs". He: "I am not surprised to hear it. Let them do so. Do I know the mvila of my father?" Somebody told him: "Alas, the posts of your house have been hollowed out by the boring beetle". He said: "Let it do so. Do I know the mvila of my father?" One of them came back to report: "E, your bananas and your maize have been ruined by the storm". He: "E, he is not allowed to do so. Am I to recite the mvila of my father?"

Some time went by and then he decided that he should travel to the sky to make the acquaintance of his father and his mvila. No sooner said than done. He met the nduutu that asked him: "Where are you going?" He: "On my way to the sky am I to see my father and ask him about his mvila". The nduutu helped him and, walking ahead, he cleared a wide road for him all the way down to the Nzadi. Arrived at the river, he found no canoe to carry him to the opposite bank. Instead, the crocodile came and ferried him across. On the other bank, he searched for the way to the sky but could not find it. Then the nzambi spider brought his thread and helped him. The spider ascended to the sky and fixed a loop of the thread there. Returning to the earth, the spider said to the boy: "This is the way leading to the sky" and so both climbed up into the sky.

When the dwellers of the sky descried the boy, they asked him: "Why have you come?"

He answered: "To see my father, Nzambi Mpungu, to inquire about my mvila". On hearing this, they said: "Well, be seated". They went away to palaver. They agreed to let him sleep in the lion house where he would surely be devoured. They did not realize, however, that he had brought a nyanzi fly. The fly overheard their plotting and reported their decision to the boy. E, the boy was sadly grieved, but the borer beetle helped him by penetrating the main post of the lion house and making a large hole in it.

In the evening, the villagers showed the boy his sleeping quarters. He went straight into the hole made by the beetle and hid himself. The villagers let the lions into the house and closed it. But the lions had no idea that a human being was in their midst. In the morning, the villagers let out the lions and, finding the house empty, they assumed that the boy had been eaten and hid. But then, to their astonishment, the boy appeared.

Again the villagers had a palaver. One of them was told: "May you be changed into a small boy with mpele sores, sitting on the rubbish heap. Meanwhile, we shall dress up in splendid garments and when the stranger comes we shall say: Look here, if your father is present, select him from our midst. If he selects one of us, attired in our finery, he shall be killed". Again, the fly overheard them and informed the boy. When they sent for him, he was told: "Select your father, who is among us". He chose the boy with the sores seated on the rubbish heap, and said: "You may disguise yourself like this, but you are still taata". The people were struck with amazement. Then the villagers said: "Well, we hear he is your father. Go then, tomorrow, and fell a big tree in one single stroke of the axe. If you are unable to fell the tree, he is not your father and you shall die". When he heard this, the boy thought: "How am I to do it? I cannot possibly fell a tree in one stroke". But the borer beetle heard him and went away to help the boy. He bored and bored until the tree was hollowed out clear to the bark without leaving any traces on the outside. All night long he bored and bored and did not sleep.

Came morning, the people called the boy and gave him an axe to fell the mahogany tree in one stroke. He went up to the tree, struck an impressive attitude in front of it and struck it, "mapoo". A strong gust of wind helped him so that the tree shuddered and fell to the ground. All who saw it were overwhelmed with wonder. Again the people congregated and called the stranger, and his father appeared, saying: "Yes, I am indeed your father. You have creditably completed the search for the prohibition in your mvila". The son rejoiced. He was also told about his father's mvila. Then he travelled back to earth by the thread of the nzambi spider. The crocodile carried him across the river and the boy returned to his village.

He was very happy and grateful to those who had helped him. He had a full sister whom he wished to give in marriage to one of his helpers. But at this point a quarrel arose among his neighbours. Some of them declared, that the nyanzi fly was to marry the girl, seeing that it had helped him. Others said: "No, the borer beetle is to have her", Others said: "No the nzambi spider". Others again: "No, the crocodile". Others said: "No, the nduutu rodent". Still others, finally, thought the storm should marry the girl. — Well, what is your opinion? Who had worked hardest and so should receive the girl in marriage?

## Natural Phenomena

The whirlwind (*kimbongila*) possesses *nkisi* power. It rouses the wind to storm during the rainy season, when it can also cause harm to people. The *nkisi* sweeping along on the whirlwind and the storm is *Nkondi* or *Nakongo*. The *banganga* may also send storms, to match their strength against each other. This happens in the *ndoolo* season when the raging storms screech: "nakii-kii-kii". Those who make *nkisi* then say: "Be silent, my brethren pass in the storm". When a *nganga* wants to conjure the whirlwind, he starts by preparing the medicines *lusaku-saku* and *luyala lwa nzo*, mixing them with palm-wine. He spits three times into the mixture and says: "Ah, mothers, you too, have become a *nkisi* to no avail (dead) but listen. You are such as you were, catch on the ground and catch in the air; the village of your destination lies visible; they will laugh, they will cry. So it is you who have appeared there to rouse the whirlwind and the storm. Their loincloths they lose, their eyes are pulled out, houses are rent and trees are felled". In this way the *nganga* sends the whirlwind and the storm to demonstrate his power. It is believed that the storm in passing throws the village wide open to diseases. Then the people send for a *nganga* to return the whirlwind to its proper duties. After painting crosses on the door sills, they take a pinch of soil and sprinkle it in a *nkisi* bag, over the heads of the people, and on the road to the village. Then they dance as though for twins and throttle the storm and the whirlwind by *nkisi* magic. The whirlwind carries off innocent and guilty alike to bewilder the people. The storm fells trees, palms and bananas alike, to show its power. When the *nkisi* storm rages the people do not wish to sit and talk indoors, nor do they dare to lie down. Instead, they blow the *mbambi* pipe and throw ashes. Children are nursed with care and cradled in their mother's lap to protect them from the storm.

The lightning belongs to *Nkondi* or some other *nkisi* of the sky. When the lightning has struck, the people hurry off to search for mica-slate to put into the *nkisi* as *bilongo* for those that have been struck down by a *nkisi* of the sky. If someone is killed by lightning without any previous illness, the *banganga* say that *Nkondi* has eaten him because his ancestors ate the property of other people without paying for it. Their dupes were later buried in *Nkondi* to ensure his revenge. When *Nkondi* is invoked, a gun is fired (symbolizing the lightning) to induce the lightning to wreak revenge on the guilty.

In the old days, it was believed that *Nkondi* originally fell from the sky with a roar of



thunder. If lightning strikes in a village, it has been sent by bakisi. Otherwise, it can come down anywhere it wants to on its wanderings. When the lightning flashes unceasingly, "natele-lele-lele", the banganga appeal: "Carry upwards or downwards, where the young women and men multiply, rob, strike. Cut down the nsafu trees, cut down the palms. Oh Lord Nkondi, protect us!" When the thunder peals, it is said that the banganga and the bandoki have climbed up to the sky where they scour the clouds, and fight each other.

The sky sends rain but it may also retain it and then the banganga are powerless. The sky, not Nzambi, is master of the rain. The sky is imagined as a human being, as it is always referred to as "he" (yandi). "He" lets the rain fall, the thunder peal, etc. The rain rules the human race, as it produces food and gives health to mankind. The banganga, too, may send rain when the sky is overcast and the rain is overdue. Then it is said that the banganga have eaten the rain or chased it away. When they wish to prevent rain they blow the mbambi pipes "lwe-lwe-lwe, ke-ke-ke" or "ne-ne-ne". There is a saying: "The sky is still and silent, to let the earth dry." Then the banganga cover their bakisi, sometimes immersing them in water, and take baths themselves. If the rain still does not come, the banganga are abused and persecuted.

The rain may also be held up if a girl becomes pregnant before having her first menstruation. If she repeats the offence, the sky remains sealed until she has been exposed and is abused in strong terms. After that, she must be taken to water and in full view of the people be bathed with water fetched in a calabash, which is then broken to pieces before the crowd. All the villagers join in incantations. They wander about the village singing dirges that say: "What keeps away the rain is the clitoris. What keeps the rain away is the vulva", and similar utterances.

Of all the heavenly bodies, the moon (ngonda) is the most remarkable, by reason of its changing from full to new. The moon is, furthermore, senior to the sun. The moon is male and is more powerful than the sun, as it is able to warm itself in the rays of the morning sun. The wife of the moon (nkazi a ngonda) is the evening or morning star. The moon furthermore has a palm-wine tapper close by, across from the wife's house, close to the door opening. The power of the moon is most evident when it is new. It makes healthy people ill and the sick even worse. People and animals alike are driven to frenzy. They slap the kimbanzya leaves into holes over their hands and pray to the moon: "Moon, moon, you who snatch away everything, you who cause pains in the belly, you who make the arms and legs ache, you who make our bodies feel heavy, and our heads spin so that we go far, far away, watwa walula (are you ready, are you seasoned)? Leave us. We have brought you palm-wine and young women and these are your palm-wine tappers. Look down at the earth and up to the sky". When the moon is new, the organs near the heart and lungs decrease in size just like the crescent. People are not able to breathe as usual. Lunatics, on the other hand, become more lucid although they become very talkative. Those who tap palm-wine, find that the moon has caused the palms to go dry. No one dares to invoke the moon to desist from this practice. Nobody knows how the moon would react. Perhaps it would fall ill and die. No one approaches the moon in wrath.



*Plate 2. Nkisi Mbenza Mangundasi (Laman 545) and his dog (mbwa Mbenza), Sundi in Kiobo (Laman 541).*



The moon may let new teeth grow to replace those that fell out by themselves. Someone who has lost a tooth says: "Moon, moon, as you pass, bring along a tooth for me", throwing the tooth into the sky.

At new moon the people also say: "Moon, moon, with you I am renewed", striking their hand, *bimpanzingila*, two or three times. Mothers hold their children upside down, turning their seats to the moon, and say: "Moon, moon, my child has become new with you, *ma-ma-ma*". Adults may also turn their seats to the moon.

When the moon goes down, the people say: "We will sleep while you pass under the earth to rise again. Therefore, go and take along food for your wife. Begone to your setting point and leave us in health, the end of the root to one side, the foot to the other side, as your equal the sun" (that is, to prevent a collision). The moon is older than the sun. The moon is considered stern and cruel, while the sun is kind to old people and to all who wish for light and warmth. The symbol of the sun is a full circle, betokening health and strength, an unimpaired *nsala* soul. By contrast, the moon is variable, it alternately waxes and wanes from full to new (*vesuka*=crumble at the edges).

Sun, moon and clouds may all be incorporated into *minkisi*. The *nganga* captures the sun or the moon by painting the ground with chalk and *ndimba* red when its rising. When the heavenly body has reached its zenith, it is caught. The smoke of ignited gunpowder rising into the clouds has *nkisi* power that prevents the rain from falling.

When the moon is surrounded by a halo, it is said that *banganga* have set a trap in the sky. When the moon is new, the *banganga* seek to give new power to their *minkisi* as the moon gathers strength. They fire gunpowder and beseech the moon to let its power pass into the *nkisi* so that it will be able to smite people with diseases and to heal them, and to bring good luck in hunting, that the *banganga* may wax rich.

The new moon is honoured and respected, which manifests itself in various ways. In some places, the first manioc root or peanut is sacrificed to the moon. Thanks are offered to the moon, while one peanut, for instance, is thrown to the east and one to the west, so that the assistance rendered by the sun is rewarded at the same time. In other places, a token part of the first crop is sacrificed to the *basimbi* spirits, that are the eldest and most respected ancestors. At new moon it is the right time to set cuttings of manioc and other plants that are to grow long roots. Banana trees are planted at full moon to make the fruit grow in large bunches.

The sun is a hard-working woman who has no thought of retiring early and causing darkness. The sun scatters the darkness caused by the moon. If the moon should prevail, the world would soon come to an end, as the waning moon descends towards the earth to bewitch it. When the moon is new, the earth trembles because the moon carries away the souls of people and animals alike. Consequently, the sun and the moon are in constant rivalry. They pursue each other and the day they collide, the human race will perish. The men will turn into lizards and the women into frogs.

Comets predict famine. Every star is the signal for a particular activity, such as planting peanuts or tapping palm-wine.

Because of its immense power the river Congo (Nzadi) commands deep respect; prayers and appeals are addressed to it by those about to cross it. The simbi spirits live in its rapids and whirlpools.

In the old days, the Nzadi was imagined as a living being that could expose and punish crimes and read the secrets of the heart. Nzadi has eyes to see the people that cross it and ears to hear them. Before crossing, everyone must tell the river how conditions are in his home village, and confess if his wife is pregnant, or if he has committed adultery, or if his child is ill, in short everything that might predispose to accidents and bad luck. If two men secretly share the same woman, they must confess to Nzadi, otherwise he will be angered and smite them with death. All other guilty secrets must likewise be revealed. Someone who confesses to Nzadi, takes water in his mouth, spits it upwards and downwards and says: "We have died long ago. Let us not be enemies, yala nkala (flatten the grave mound)" which is an appeal to Nzadi not to cause any trouble. If this is neglected, Nzadi may catch hold of the canoe and the crew dies in the whirlpools. Someone who is returning home and thus ignorant of actual conditions in his village, must observe absolute silence during the crossing. Everyone fording or ferrying across the Nzadi, or any other water, must break off a leaf (nkolumuna) and cast it in the water as a sacrifice to the simbi spirits dwelling there. A ferryman who makes his living on the water is exempted from making this offering.

At the Nzadi all prohibitions regarding food and drink are voided by saying: "Puli, may all disease remain here". Then one fills one's mouth with water and spits it upwards and downwards. The prohibition has disappeared and one may eat with the others.

In addition to the watercourses that house simbi spirits and where they are invoked before a crossing by casting a nkolumuna leaf in the water, these spirits may also be found in pools and in water-filled, or even dry caves. Some of these places are forbidden to certain mvila but the children and grandchildren may go there. These places are ruled by the paramount chief of simbi spirits, known as Mpulu Buzi, Mpulu Bunzi or Mpili Bizi.

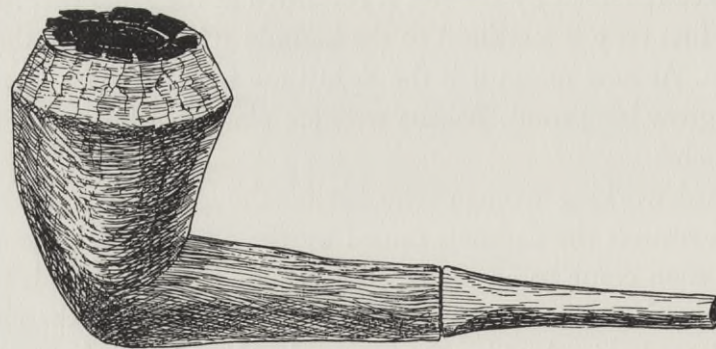


Fig. 10. Tobacco-pipe, Sundi (Laman 1604).

## Nkisi Cult

What on the west coast is referred to as "fetishism" is actually a degenerated form of nkisi cult. Nkisi formerly connoted what nkuyu now signifies among the Bembe and other tribes, i.e. the spirit of a deceased person that has been captured and incorporated with a sculpture, which is then generally referred to as nkuyu.

Mukisi or nkisi to this day signifies the spirit of a deceased person among the peoples in the Kasai region. During the Catholic period the grave was referred to as nzo a nkisi (nkisi's house). Nkisi connoted the deceased person, one who lives in another world, a spirit. The natives also use the phrases nzo a nzambi or nzo a mpungu of the grave, since the deceased person has entered a supernatural state with greater strength and power. He has the shape and power of the wind (of a spirit), like Nzambi. They also call a nkisi nzambi (god), who helps man and cures him. Nkisi therefore has mwela (breath, life, soul) and also ngolo (power), but it cannot surpass the Creator.

In the last analysis nkisi thus refers to the spirits of the deceased, who wish to appear in the one form or the other in order to be worshipped and invoked. Thus the first great heroes, the founders of the powerful tribes of the Kongo, Nsundi and Mbenza etc., are still the objects of worship and cult practices through minkisi with these names. The first great nkisi was Nakongo. Others have in course of time arisen for different purposes, but it is only during recent generations that a whole series of minkisi of minor importance have existed.

A nkisi is an ancestral spirit that has taken shape in a sculpture or some other object, with or without medicine bag, so that through its presence and power it helps the owner if he has learned how to use the nkisi, has dedicated himself to it and observes the rites prescribed by its nganga. The nkisi's will is apparent in the prescriptions. To follow these is to feel well, live long and, in due time, to be received with honour by the deceased. If anyone contravenes the prescriptions nkisi is rendered impure, as its sacredness has in this case not been preserved. Its power has ceased to exist or been "closed". Nkisi must therefore be sanctified, "raised up" again. This is effected when the culprit purifies himself and once again dedicates himself to the nkisi, submits completely to its laws and rites and pays an expiatory fine.

The banganga believe that minkisi have come from Nzambi, for they are called "the

little liars that Nzambi has produced". Minkisi are strong, have eyes and ears, life and power, and they are able to cure the sick. If Nzambi comes before nkisi, the latter cannot prevail. No-one recovers his health if Nzambi calls upon him, i.e. wishes that he should die.

The first nkisi was composed by MUKULU, the old forbear. MENTETE or NZAMBI A NSI, the first human being, who descended from heaven and paved the way on earth, brought with him a nkisi, Mukongo or Nakongo, which was more excellent than other minkisi. He then taught others to compose this nkisi. In Bwende it is thought that NZAMBI A NSI's house still exists; it is a big rock in the middle of a valley which is called Bweno. Others call such a rock grotto Mukongo's cave.

Minkisi have subsequently come from man's spirit, for according to the native theories of the soul the deceased have lived to pass over into nkita and simbi spirits. These have left the world of the dead to take up their abode here and there in and on the earth, e.g. under stones, in watercourses and forests or on the plains etc.

If a deceased nganga wishes to make the nkisi of the kanda famous or to give a certain nkisi to the village, he sends a nkisi-spirit in an object so that it may be adopted by someone in his kanda. The relative finds this when in the state of ecstasy he seizes an object and rushes home to the village with it. Here he is taken charge of and kept in the lusamba shed (a hallowed place) until a nganga comes and finds out which nkisi it is. Then the requisite medicines are collected and the nkisi is composed according to his instructions. An ancestral nkisi-spirit may also of its own accord come and seek out an owner by revealing itself to the latter in a dream, through some animal or disease or in some other way in order to support those of his line and give nganga a source of income from curing the sick etc.

The nkisi has life through the nkisi-spirit, but this is not the same kind of life as the life of human beings. One may thrust the blade of a knife into it, break off an arm, burn it, but no-one can see blood flowing or hear any cry.

Nkisi has mwela (breath), but not in the same way as a person, for then it would of course be able to speak and run away and so on. But it listens to nganga and does as the latter tells it. The nganga treats the sick person outwardly, but nkisi inwardly. When the invalid drinks the nkisi-medicine he receives health through nkisi and recovers. The nkisi-life cannot come to an end, it is transmitted.

The nkisi-power is constituted by the sum of the powers that are represented by the bilongo (medicines) existing in the same, and the power and ability of the nganga, for with invocations and spells the latter sends his nkisi to perform his wishes. Bilongo are referred to as "nkisi's limbs".

The strength and courage of nkisi's will depend also upon its shape, whether, for example, it is a male or a female nkisi. The former is more violent when it attacks a person, and besets him more persistently. A female nkisi, on the other hand, is milder and prefers to calm and assuage. A number of minkisi consist of both male and female sculptures.

In order to enhance the power of certain old and great minkisi human blood is also used in their composition. Thus a man and a woman were killed when nkisi Nakanga vangu was composed, in order that their blood should be mixed with nkisi. Both were bound

very tightly, so that they shrieked and writhed and graphically represented the torment, the shrieks and lamentations of one whom Nakanga vangu should attack.

Attempts have also been made to make use of the magic power exercised by bandoki by taking a finger, a piece of bone or the like from a ndoki and incorporating it with nkisi.

The appearance and properties of minkisi vary according to the sphere of activity. As a rule they are used to cure maladies. No-one uses e.g. nkisi Nsundi to cure a headache, nor nkisi Mbwanga to cure a stomach-ache, but the other way round. Every nkisi has its own affliction that it imposes, and it is used also in the treatment of the same.

Certain bigger minkisi have bows, knives (swords) and other weapons, above all guns. These are fastened to the sculpture or elsewhere. The guns, "guns of the night" or minkisi-guns, are small stalks of grass or blown hen's eggs which are magically loaded with medicine, powder and a bit of a palm seed that a rat has gnawed. They are hung up in the house or buried, like the egg, at the threshold etc. Every ndoki that enters is shot with the magic shots.

All the parts of animals, plants and stones etc. that are incorporated in a nkisi have their effect, according as they have been created by Nzambi.

In the south, towards the sea, minkisi are said to have come from Mpulu Buzi or Mpulu Bunzi, who is the chief of all bisimbi, ruler of the wind and the waters and creator of all minkisi. His land was the sea, his dwelling there beside a very big tree-stump. This got branches. It resembled a little forest with many branches, where men lived.

In the rainy season Mpulu Buzi wandered about going to all waters, rapids, ravines and caves, and all minkisi followed him with the exception of those he left behind in the sea. Everything having a peculiar appearance, whether a termite stack or stone, was called simbi and regarded as a nkisi created by Mpulu Buzi. It was he who gave power to cure diseases and support the people.

Farther to the north Bunzi was considered to be the creator of human beings and minkisi. In Bwende, Funza was the greatest and most powerful nkisi, for he could create twins.

Mpulu Buzi travels in the storm in the ndoolo season. He looks like a tall human being, and the sculptures are made accordingly. The first nkisi belonged to the Nkosi (the smasher) line; after these came those of the Kyese (joy) line.

During the first rains small minkisi were sent down to earth with the wind. They were found by people, who went into ecstasy at the sight of them.

The ancestors consider that Mpulu Buzi himself made the first minkisi in the water. These were even able to speak and tell people how they were to be composed and how the sick should be treated (buka). His minkisi are of the bisimbi line.

If a nkisi is to function the nganga must learn how to compose (vanda) it with or without song, dance or beating of the drum. Formerly a nkisi would overtake with a powerful ecstasy at a watercourse or elsewhere a person for whom it conceived a liking. The person might then be gone nine nsona-days, after which a man (woman) would come home with a nkisi in the right (left) hand. A male simbi gives a male nkisi, a female simbi a female nkisi. The object for which someone goes into ecstasy is given by the nkisi-spirit, and is



the core of the composed nkisi. If it is an object from the sky that falls down, e.g. the tail feather of a parrot or a piece of mica (this is considered to come with the lightning), then a sky-nkisi is composed. If the object is from water or land, it will, accordingly, be a water-nkisi or a land-nkisi.

A nkisi generally manifests itself to its master through the sickness with which it afflicts him. The sick person then summons a nganga to be cured. If it is a matter of a serious illness, the nganga often instructs the patient to compose, under his supervision, the nkisi in question and dedicate himself to it, so that he may recover from the illness and also be able to help others. As soon as he has composed the nkisi he is its nganga.

A nkisi is able both to afflict a person with a disease and to cure him. For this reason a malady is often called by the name of the nkisi provoking it. The malady came first, and when a nkisi that cured it had been found the malady was given the nkisi's name. Thus e.g. Syadada (bloody diarrhoea) is the name of the nkisi that cures bloody diarrhoea. The same applies to smallpox Bimwengi or Sala nsamba, chicken-pox Cubu-cubu or Kulu-kulu, mumps Mayititi etc.

Maladies are often given the names of nkisi when the nganga has said that a nkisi has caused them. The nkisi name has, however, many other causes. Thus the struma nkisi is called Kihudi from the knots found on trees which are also called kihudi and are considered to be caused by Funza.

In more recent times the knowledge of medical herbs has increased considerably, and it sometimes happens that a herbalist composes a so-called nkisi for the disease which can be cured by the herbs with which he has made himself acquainted.

The composition of a nkisi must be absolutely identical with that of the first nkisi with the same name, and the treatment of the sick person likewise. The price for composing the nkisi and for the treatment must also be precisely the same. The paramount nganga (ngudi a nganga), i.e. the nganga who has previously possessed and composed a nkisi must teach the art to the novices and tell them the prohibitions of the nkisi in question.

If anyone wants to find a new nkisi he must ally himself with basimbi or a deceased spirit of some powerful or cruel ruler, so that the latter may be incorporated in the nkisi and endow it with his power.

When a great nkisi with sculpture is composed the nganga asks: "Shall people be put into the sculpture?" If this is agreed to, someone will shortly die and his spirit will become aggressive and want to kill people through nkisi.

When MUKULU composed the first nkisi he had a revelation concerning it in a dream from Nzambi or Funza, who showed him the medicines that were to be put into the nkisi. When MUKULU awoke he took some of the leaves that had been indicated and gave the sick person to drink. The latter recovered. The leaves thus derived their power from him who had created them. MUKULU then taught other banganga to compose nkisi, and these in their turn passed on their knowledge to those coming after them.

When someone has composed a nkisi his life is preserved in the latter and he is protected from disease. Many people therefore make several minkisi. A nkisi is regarded as a support

that maintains life. But the owner remains healthy only if he observes the nkisi's laws in all particulars. On this account and because the laws are so numerous, many natives do not want to become banganga and compose a nkisi. A nganga who does not observe these laws is afflicted with the nkisi-power and must be purified and dedicated. The nkisi power to cure disappears, moreover, if the nganga does not observe the prescriptions for the nkisi, who in this case does not obey but becomes wroth. If the treated person contravenes the prescriptions he becomes ill and must be treated again.

If a nkisi has lost its power for some reason, it must be sanctified according to the prescriptions of the tradition. If it is a matter of a great and powerful nkisi a hen must be sacrificed so that the blood may be poured out on the nkisi in atonement and the paramount nganga bless it.

The nkisi-power vanishes, too, when the nkisi's nganga dies. It is as if the nkisi itself had died. It may, however, be inherited, but the person inheriting it may not use the nkisi until he has been dedicated and initiated by a paramount nganga.

The nganga must also dedicate himself and confess his guilt to nkisi, as for example: "Yes, Sir nkisi, I admit that I am lewd, a gossip and a thief. We forgot your laws, therefore I am mpati (nganga) I nganga. You treat inwardly, I treat outwardly."

Nkisi also gets angry if the nganga does not give it its share of sacrificial gifts, palm wine, blood from game that has been shot, corn etc. at harvest-time and so forth. Nkisi must in this case be appeased with these gifts.

A nkisi must be honoured according to its importance. If the nganga does not honour it, nobody else will do so. Hence the proverb: "Is this nkisi to be put on the ground or on a mat?" i.e. how is it to be honoured in order not to be offended.

A chief in a village may compose a great nkisi which is then the possession of all the inhabitants in the village. It may be used against diseases and to protect the village from surprise attacks by bandoki and other enemies.

There are minkisi for different ages, for a mother and her foetus, for begetting, for prosperity in all trades, for war, hunting, agriculture and so on. Minkisi protect people, the village, palms and fruit-trees.

Minkisi belong, as has already been mentioned, to three great classes: land, water and sky minkisi, according as their nkisi-forming medicines derive from these respective spheres. It is rare, however, for a nkisi to have all its medicine from only one of these spheres.

According to the field in which a nkisi is active the natives distinguish pepper-nkisi (bags with pepper and other strong medicines) for external treatment, shell and pot nkisi for the taking of medicine, a nkisi for the smeller-out for the diagnosis of disease and the disclosing of criminals, protective nkisi for protection in war, against certain maladies, evil spirits etc., restorer nkisi to guide the soul back to the sick body, suction nkisi to suck out stones, hail etc. from the guns in war-time, nkisi Nkondi (who lies in wait for game) for the swearing of oaths, the conclusion of treaties, the pronouncing of blessings or curses, reviver nkisi for fertility and productiveness, awakening nkisi for love, nkisi Kula for the subjugation of spirits, coronation nkisi, nkisi for the hunt and many others.

Formerly, when there were great tribal minkisi such as Nakongo, Nansundi and Nambenza, these were used for several purposes. Besides these there were, certainly, lesser minkisi; but later, when the nkisi cult became so wide-spread and finally also degenerated, false minkisi and banganga arose to deceive the people in many ways.

It is often very difficult to know which nkisi is to be used in a case of sickness, for sometimes the sickness has not been caused by a nkisi, but by a ndoki, the spirit of a deceased person or a curse. On such occasions a nganga who has nkisi Mutadi or Ntadi is summoned, i.e. the seeker or smeller-out.

Every nkisi has its invariable shape, reproducing the form in which it made its first appearance. Many of them consist of an image, combined with a medicine bag and other appurtenances requisite to its use. The medicine may be kept in a salu or futu bag, in nkutu bags, in diila bundles of raffia, in pots, calabashes, baskets or jars of various shapes. Animal horns and shells are also used. Some minkisi are big and contain stones or other heavy objects and are therefore kept in ntete or mpidi baskets to make them portable. The nkisi is often adorned with rattles and bells, used by the nganga in his work. The nkisi bundle usually includes mikubulu bags and other articles used in massage. To embellish the nkisi, it is often covered with monkey skin or some other beautiful fur.

Anyone wishing to learn the art of making a nkisi (vanda) must apply to a ngudi a nganga experienced in the manufacture of the desired nkisi; this is how a nkisi is kept alive through the ages. It is also the only way to become a nganga. A number of minkisi have both male and female banganga, but male banganga are the rule. Only a few minkisi have exclusively female banganga. As a rule, women are relegated to the position of assistants (mimbanda). They grind chalk, yellow ochre and other ingredients for the nkisi bags, and prepare the food during the manufacture of the nkisi.

First, the medicine (bilongo) and other ingredients required to make up the nkisi are assembled. If a more substantial nkisi is going to be manufactured, bunches of bananas, palm-wine and pigs for slaughter are added. Following this, the first step is to erect the enclosure (lusaba) or shed (lusanga) in which the medicine is going to be prepared (teba). The fence of the enclosure is often constructed with the branches of the lubota tree, madyadya grass and a young palm-tree. The top shoots of the palm-tree are twined around the upper edge of the fence with the leaves pointing downwards. Leaf by leaf is bound to the fence with palm-twigs. The work is accompanied by singing. The lusanga shed usually consists of a roof supported by three walls. Often the lusaba is put close to or adjoining a house where shelter can be found against the rain. Sometimes the preparation of the medicine is concealed under blankets or a large cover sewn together from pieces of raffia cloth. Some minkisi are manufactured in a wood or in the water, in which case the novice and the high nganga may be away for several days and sometimes even for a considerable period of time. A flat and smooth stone to grind and prepare the medicine on is put inside the enclosure. This is consecrated by digging a small hole into which medicine and palm-wine is put. The stone is placed over the hole and a circle drawn on the stone with chalk, nkula, or some other red paint, and charcoal. Sometimes a piece of raffia is put over the stone. During this ceremony,

a number of incantations are chanted over and over again. The mimbanda then set about to grind chalk, yellow ochre, salt, medicinal leaves, and other ingredients on the stone. Certain *minkisi* have a rule forbidding them to speak during this work. They must hold a *nkuka* feather between their lips. Meanwhile, the novices are busy sewing medicine bags, *mikubulu*, and other accessories.

The medicine is made up of seeds and other vegetable matter, snake heads, pieces of animal skin and scrapings (scrape off=*teba*) from secret medicines. Many indispensable ingredients are rare and difficult to procure, or too large and unwieldy, so that a small portion of them has to serve the purpose of the whole. Many of these ingredients are fetched from the woods, the plain or the water by someone in a state of ecstasy. Others are taken from the sky. If, for instance, someone looks fixedly at the setting sun and then closes his eyes, he will perceive a shimmer on opening his eyes again and has thereby taken the sun. Every particle scraped off a medicine contains all of its secret properties. The name of the medicine indicates which is the active property in each particular instance. Both when preparing the medicine and when treating the sick with it, the *nganga* recites a formula indicating its powers. When he takes a partridge egg, for instance, the *nganga* says: "Eh, they hatch me (find what is inside me), *ku bunganga*" (the latter refers to the magical powers of the *nganga*). If a *mbidi* fruit is used, he says: "They will praise (*bila*) me, *ku bunganga*". When he uses *ndingi* copal as a symbol of lightning — it sends flashes through the body and thereby gives warning of danger — he says: "Eh, you shall warn me", but when using *ndingi* with its name derived from *dinga*=seek: "They will seek me, *ku bunganga*". *Ndingi*, with the meaning "still water" (from *dingalala*) is sometimes given to patients as a sedative. If a *muzaazu* cocoon or a piece of chalk is used, the *nganga* says: "Eh, they will bring me luck (*zaazuka*), *ku bunganga*", respectively "I draw with chalk, I make white (set free, heal) and I am a *nganga*". The sprouting bulbs of the *lusakusaku* plant symbolize fertility and are used with the phrase: "Eh, they bless (*sakumuna*) me, *ku bunganga*". When the claw (*simba*) of a bat is used, the *nganga* says: "Eh, hold firmly (*simba*), do not release your grip, *ku bunganga*". This exhortation is used when the *nganga* has found a clue in his investigation.

The preparation of some medicines is accompanied by a great deal of beating on the drums, singing, dancing and revelry. Others are prepared in more or less complete silence.

Some of the more important *minkisi*, such as *Nkondi*, take considerable time to complete and the work is done in several instalments. *Nkondi* takes six instalments to prepare whereas others are finished in only a few days or even in one day.

The work of assembling the medicines and putting them into the *nkisi* bags is usually begun to the accompaniment of chants and incantations indicating the functions of the *nkisi* in question. *Nkisi Nakongo*, for instance, is assembled with the words: "Yika, yika (increase), *banda, banda* (strike), *hongonono, hongonono* (imitating the sound of a certain species of frog)".

When the village has been sprinkled and both the novices and the *ngudi* a *nganga* have been consecrated, the medicines are put into their bags or bundles. Often the medicines that

are considered especially dangerous, powerful or poisonous, such as snake heads, claws of the ngembo bat or hair of albinos, are put at the bottom. Sometimes the nkisi requires that separate male and female medicine bags be prepared. In addition, small medicine bundles, amulets, magical knots (bikandu) and other receptacles are made. Several of the accessories, and in particular the image itself are given a heart of medicine (ntima) which is attached with resin.

The medicine hearts of the images contain a live insect or an object from a grave that is possessed by a nkuyu, which may thus be incorporated with the image and the nkisi. Formerly the hearts of the images contained beetles or other animals with a metallic lustre, intended to scare away the bandoki and bankuyu with their flash and glitter, but these have now been replaced by bits of mirror or ordinary glass.

The ngudi a nganga furthermore instructs the novices (baana banganga) in the art of mixing certain medicines for sale, such as midyaka, bonzo, myemo, lemba-lamba, and for nkisi Kula makuta. In many cases these medicines require the blessing of a father of twins. The ngudi a nganga himself invokes the nkisi in prayer on behalf of the novices who cut the medicine and assemble the nkisi.

Usually a nkuyu must be captured and incorporated into the nkisi, as it is the nkuyu's power, in combination with the medicine and the magic practised by the nganga, which makes the nkisi effective. The bankuyu are found in the burial ground, especially by the grave of a powerful chief or a great nganga. All sorts of tricks are resorted to in order to soften the heart of the nkuyu and entice it, such as putting out appetizing food and palm-wine so that a piece of raffia cloth may be thrown over the nkuyu. Thus caught, it can be incorporated into the image or the nkisi.

Some minkisi have binkonko animals at their disposal. The nganga hides his soul in them so that he may use them, with the help of the nkisi, to harm others and further his own ends, or else to ensure himself a long life.

A nkisi often has several appendages, such as madibu or kunda bells, whisks, rattles, whistles, gongs, and other implements used to invoke the nkisi. Other accessories are used for massage, while weapons, such as miniature bows and arrows, knives or spears, are kept for protection. These appendages are made first of all and later provided with medicine. Ornaments such as rings, bells, beads, porcelain buttons, and a baldric for the nkisi or image, are likewise common accessories. The signs of office of the nganga vary. Nganga Lemba, for instance, wears a copper armband. Nganga Mpodu wears a Calabar bean threaded on a string round his upper arm. A nganga is often distinguished by lines of different colours drawn at the corners of his eyes, on his brow and on other parts of his face.

A nkisi is usually tested and consecrated at the same time. The nganga goes to nseke-nda ("the distant country"), returning after some time with the completed nkisi. The nkisi is tested with the assistance of someone who possesses the faculty of transporting himself into ecstasy. This medium is asked: "Tell us, is this really a true nkisi or not?" The nganga blows on the medium, blesses the medicine and spits, pfu-pfu, at the back of the medium. If the medium then falls into ecstasy, taking the nkisi and throwing it about with all its accessories,

the nkisi is proved genuine. The nkisi is then consecrated by placing three heaps of gunpowder around it and igniting them while the consecration formula is intoned.

The novices are often tested by being "killed" and "resurrected". Other forms of trial consist in taking a strong, peppered vapour bath, being shot at with magic guns to make sure no ndoki is among them, eating human faeces or drinking water in which women have washed after menstruation.

A nkisi cannot be used before ngudi a nganga has received payment from the novices, otherwise he will not reveal how the nkisi must be tended and what prohibitions are attached to it. The amount paid varies for different nkisi, but each one has its fixed price that may neither be exceeded nor reduced. If the fixed rate were not observed, the nkisi would fail to discharge its functions. Formerly, a nkisi would be paid for with several slaves. This currency was later replaced by guns, gunpowder, parcels of cloth, or money.

Every nkisi has its fixed abode, where it must be kept to prevent it from being desecrated and thus becoming useless. Nakongo, for instance, is kept in the house of a brother-in-law, while Bunzi is suspended from a peg by the door so that it can see everybody. Other great minkisi are kept in specially constructed sheds, houses or shrines. Otherwise the nkisi is kept on a shelf or suspended from the inside or outside wall of the owner's house.

The minkisi have a variety of functions. They intervene in every aspect of life, be it in the social, political, legal or religious sphere. A nkisi can operate of its own accord, or by order of a nganga or a ndoki, but as its sphere of action is restricted by its inherent qualities, it is possible to ascertain the identity of the nkisi responsible for a specific case of illness or misfortune. The nganga is expected to use his experience of medicines and magic to intervene at once and ward off the evil.

If a nganga is at all dubious about the cause, he consults a nganga manga (ngombo), the smell diviner. This nganga is helped in his investigation by inhaling the scent of aromatic herbs to render him more sensitive to the tremors that shake his body when he is in a state of ecstasy. Many of these smell diviners have a remarkable talent for finding things, especially objects that have been hidden, stolen or mislaid, as well as for reading thoughts and discovering the cause of an illness.

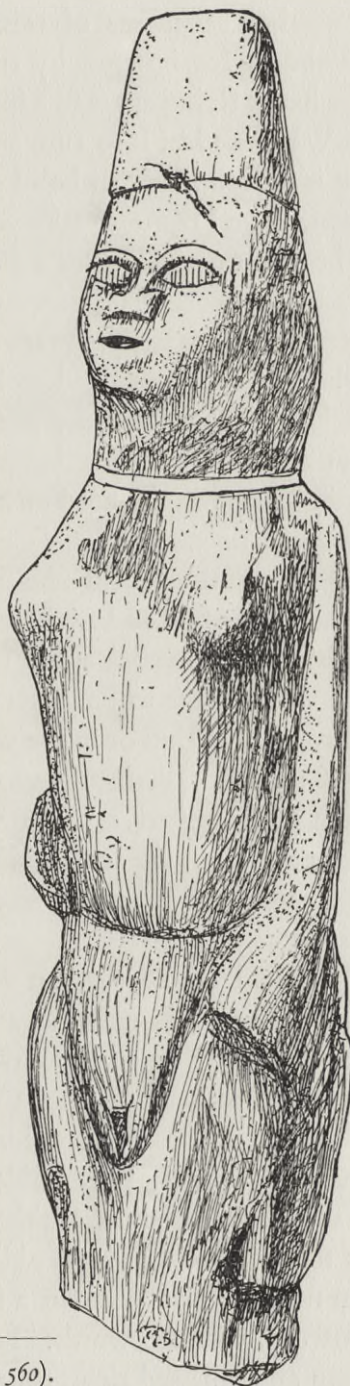


Fig. 11. Nkisi, made of stone (*nkento a Mbenza*), Sundi in Mayombe (*Laman 560*).

When the smell diviner has hit upon the correct answer in his investigation, it is registered by ecstatic tremors in his body. If a number of people have gathered into a circle with one of them hiding a palm kernel, the smell diviner asks them one by one, speaking out loud or silently to himself: "Have you got the palm kernel? Or you?" When he reaches the one that is hiding the kernel, ecstatic tremors start to shake his body. They may begin in his great toe and spread upwards through his body. (The author has himself conducted several experiments of this sort.) The smell diviner may also search (*fyela*) by other methods, for instance by rubbing his hands together. The correct result is registered by the hands flying apart to a fixed position from which they cannot be moved.

When a *nkisi* is to cure an illness, the *nganga manga* is often questioned to test whether he is indeed likely to be of any help. The one who consults the smell diviner asks: "Now then, have I come to take you to a patient, to settle a dispute about lost animals, or what?" The smell diviner takes a *dinsusu* herb, a *mwakasa* rattle or *lunyangu-yangu* and passes it under his nose, silently formulating questions until the right answer is registered by tremors (*yembo*) in his body. He answers: "Not about a dispute about an animal, but about someone who is ill and confined to bed at home". The questioning goes on: "Continue, you are right. But tell us, is the patient a man or a woman?" The smell diviner: "Not a woman, but a man". The questioner again: "Continue, your answer is correct. But tell us, is the pain located in the head or in the legs?" The smell-diviner: "It is not in the legs, but in the head". The questioner: "Continue, you are right. Find out now which *nkisi* has caused the pain in the patient's head". The smell diviner: "I felt the answer quivering through me, but pay me first and I will reveal it". When he has received his payment, he discloses which *nkisi* has the medicine and treatment that will suit the case. He must also specify whether the treatment is to be given in the village, on the road leading to the village, at a crossing of roads, on a hill or in the woods, whether at night or at dawn.

If the smell diviner is unable to ascertain these facts all by himself, he usually receives help when he arrives in the village to make his investigation. As soon as he approaches the right solution, the women shake their rattles vigorously.

Roughly the same procedure is followed to identify the *ndoki* who is devouring the patient.

When he is to cure an illness, the *nganga* often sends the patient a sedative first and follows with his *nkisi* on a propitious day. The reason for this is that some *minkisi* are effective only on certain days.

When someone comes to the *nganga* to fetch medicine, he takes medicine from his *nkisi*-bag and consecrates himself by rubbing some of it into the corners of his eyes, as he may unwittingly have defiled himself. If the *nganga* fails to consecrate himself, the *nkisi* is unable to help him. He then proceeds to scrape some of the medicines from the bag, such as *tondo*, dark and light *nkiduku*, *nkandikila* and *lufulangi*, and puts the scrapings into his mouth. He grinds down a few *lemba-lemba* leaves and spits out the medicine upon this powder, with the words: "I am a *nganga* novice, do not help the high *nganga*. He has lived long and amassed rich property. Help me like a knife, make me hot like fire. I am *mpati*,

I am your nganga. I have made the nkisi, I have not stolen it. Heal the inside as I will heal the outside. They were born and raised under the shadow of these minkisi". The nganga goes on to bless the lemba-lemba mixture, places his hands under his armpits and then extends his arms, blessing the messenger who has come to fetch the medicine. The latter accepts the blessing and is given directions for the use of the medicine.

When the messenger returns to the village, the patient is treated with the medicine. If his condition improves, the nganga is summoned for further treatment of the patient with his nkisi. On his arrival the nganga is given one papyrus mat to sit on himself and one for the nkisi. The old people said: "You who own a nkisi, honour it lest no one else will". The nganga places his nkisi with the image by one knee. He consecrates the place and himself, opens the medicine bag and chants the incantations that also mark the opening phase of the nkisi's manufacture. He then selects various medicines and seeds, scrapes them and gives the patient the scrapings, enumerating the prohibitions the latter will have to observe. The treatment usually consists of magical rites, but real medical treatment, such as massage and steam baths, is often included. Some diseases can only be cured by exorcising the nkuyu that has taken possession of the patient, while in others the nsala (soul) of the patient has to be recaptured. As another remedy, the nganga sometimes kills the bandoki through incantations and magic guns.

The ordeal by fire or poison is used as a legal measure if the accused protests his innocence. It is particularly common in cases involving theft, adultery and non-payment of loans. In the ordeal by fire, the question is settled by bau (the fire) and kisengo (the iron); an iron bar (kitanzi) or knife is heated in the fire and the accused is struck on the leg with the hot metal. If the skin is scorched off, the accused is proved guilty. The ordeal by poison is carried out with mbundu poison, from which nkisi Mbundu has derived its name. The poison consists of the pulverized bark of the mbundu tree. If the poison causes the subject of the test to empty his bladder, the accused is acquitted. Otherwise, the poison causes violent convulsions requiring immediate treatment.

An accused who protests his innocence may also be required to swear an oath by some important nkisi, such as Nkondi, while he licks the image on the brow or the eye, thereby surrendering himself to Nkondi if he is guilty.

Legal settlements, alliances entered upon by different makanda, ratification of rules and regulations and all other legal transactions are confirmed by an oath on a nkisi. Whoever breaks such an agreement is smitten by the power of the nkisi in question and struck with disease and misfortune. Severe penalties, such as a death sentence, may not be put into effect without the intervention of a nkisi. Likewise, a nkisi always plays a part at investitures to ensure that everything is done according to the wishes of the ancestors.

The banganga endeavour in various ways, with the help of their minkisi, to promote the welfare of the kanda, to ensure happiness and numerous progeny in marriage, good fortune in hunting, fishing and agriculture, in the latter case using their magical powers to produce or stop the rain, according to the prevailing need.

Minkisi and amulets can be used to protect their owner and his entire property against



evil beings, bandoki, thieves, adulterers and other evils. Practically all minkisi may be used for this purpose.

Kimfwita, Nkiduku and kindred minkisi are used to provide protection in battle. Minkisi Dyata and Nsumbu protect dogs and pigs, respectively. Nkisi Kula is one of the minkisi that exorcise the bankuyu, whereas nkisi Mvutudi belongs to the type that recaptures a lost nsala and nkisi Nkondi to those that destroy the bandoki.

Nkisi Bunzi is always regarded as the creator and tribal patron nkisi. As the creator of the firstborn he is called Bunzi Mpungu and is thus compared to Nzambi Mpungu. Nowadays Bunzi is a nkisi for the firstborn. In southern parts, closer to the sea, this nkisi is called Mpulu Bunzi, Mpulu Buzi or Mpili Bizi and is a symbol of the West Wind and the storm. Tradition has it that nkisi Bunzi created all basimbi, as well as the rocks and caves that house them. The role of creator was in the old days also ascribed to nkisi Funza, comparing him to Nzambi Mpungu. Funza is the creator of twins and anything that is bent, twisted or deformed, be it in stones, plants, animals or man. Bunzi has been kept alive, but Funza has fallen into oblivion.

Concerning worship of the minkisi, it should be noted that the oldest among them, such as Nakongo, Mpanzu, Mbenza, Mwe Nsundi, and, at a later stage, Makwangu and others, have a highly personal character, as indicated by the fact that they preserve the tribal or ancestral name. Nkisi Nsundi, among others, has received the affix Mwe, meaning Sir or Lord, a form of address often used in prayer and when invoking a nganga. A few minkisi have the personal prefix mu or n (Mutadi, Ntadi, for instance), implying that it is the nkisi itself that watches and searches, while the nganga merely interprets its observations. Other minkisi have the prefix m, nzi to indicate that theirs is the power and force (ngolo, -zi-) behind its actions, for example nkisi Mpodi (from vola—to suck out), while a nganga who sucks out a wound himself is called *muvodi* or *mvodi*, the sucker.

The word nkisi or mukisi is often placed into the ba-class, hence bankisi, in analogy with bankuyu, basimbi.

In the old days, nkisi Nakongo and several others were undoubtedly more ardently worshipped, but this cult has gradually been replaced by worship of ancestral images (bankuyu), basimbi, and a variety of other minkisi as new diseases spread in the country.

It is vitally important to the nganga to keep himself and his nkisi ritually clean, if the nkisi is to be fit for worship and effective. There are several ways in which a nkisi may be defiled, but the most common cause is that the nganga sins against its rules and prohibitions. If the nganga becomes defiled, he must be purified according to the rites of his nkisi. A nganga of nkisi Mutadi, for instance, must be purified and blessed by a brother nganga of the same nkisi and at new moon he must walk his nkisi about to bless it. A nganga may also consecrate himself by spitting (*dima*), pfu-pfu, on a luyangu-yangu herb and rubbing this first on his hands and then on his head. A nganga is also defiled by the death of a fellow nganga of the same nkisi. In that case the nkisi must be partly remade and consecrated anew, while the nganga must be ritually cleansed.

The words "consecrate" (*byeka*) and "protect" (*sidika*) are used in the sense of "hallow"

or "set apart". The term "consecrate" is not only used for a nganga, but often also for a paramount chief when he is invested with his office. That which has been set apart as sacred must remain inviolate and is therefore protected in various ways, with the aid of nkisi medicine.

A nkisi prayer generally takes the form of phrases and incantations indicating the functions of the nkisi. In the prayer (nsambu) the nkisi is beseeched to help its nganga and perform its duties. In addition, there may be songs expressing the same wishes, as for instance the one addressed to nkisi Mpanzu: "Cure a sick child for me. Solve, Mpanzu. Open Mpanzu, heal the inside, I will heal the outside. Give careful treatment, Mpanzu. Give treatment, Mpanzu, under the sun, under the moon." The prayer addressed to nkisi Nkondi has the form of an exhortation to spur the nkisi on to do its duty.

A conscientious nganga makes a daily practice of the traditional rites of consecration and the nsambu to his nkisi in order to preserve the proper relationship with the nkisi.

A nkisi is often blessed (sakumuna) by spitting (dima) on it, pfu-pfu, to rouse its zeal, wrath and power. The blessing can also be performed by sprinkling a pinch of soil over the nkisi when it is brought out, or by consecrating some object that can guide the nkisi onto the right track. Both the nganga himself and the person seeking treatment are blessed by nkisi. There may be several special occasions for blessing a nkisi, for instance at new moon so that the nkisi may, like the moon, renew its power. Other minkisi are blessed by a father of twins to initiate the preparation of medicine. The verb "to bless" (sakumuna) means "to increase in power, become plentiful, abundant", regardless of whether it refers to a nkisi, a nganga or material things. At the same ceremony the nkisi's appendages are blessed so that they may be able to function effectively. They may include cupping horns, the strings applied against snake-bite and magic guns, which become loaded by the blessing. The blessing sometimes consists in blowing smoke over the objects.

A special form of invoking the nkisi, "siba" (to declare, assure) is used by those who wish to prove their innocence, like the following plea, for instance: "Say, was it I who took his property? If so, assail me wherever I go, ashore or on the water. Lord Nakongo, Father, do as you please. Devour me if I am guilty". Such an oath may be sealed by picking up the nkisi or image and kissing it. Such assurances are uttered in numerous cases and are always accompanied by animated gesticulation; they arouse lively public interest.

The practice of beseeching a nkisi to wreak vengeance on someone who has broken an oath or a pledge of allegiance or cannot be legally persecuted, is known as "lokila nloko" (to conjure and invoke). The nkisi is appealed to as follows: "Oh Lord, Lord, listen, lend your ear. Don't you hear? Apply your force to the side of the guilty, causing confusion among them. Break their limbs, rob them and chastise them. Don't you see their village? Bring the itch, let their headache become worse, make their limbs become blotched. Scatter death about, that there may be wailing everywhere." Often a rooster is sacrificed at this ceremony. When it is decapitated, the head is held by the nganga and the legs by the plaintiff.

Similar invocations are often made to drive away the bandoki when someone is beset by

nightmares. They also bury medicine in an enemy village or some other place where wrongdoings must be revenged.

Curses (*singa*) are fairly uncommon in the nkisi cult, although ancestors seeking to revenge themselves on their children and other descendants may heap curses of varying harshness on their heads.

Sacrifices (*nkailu*) are very common in the nkisi cult. Thanksgiving offerings are made with the produce of hunting and agriculture. Such offerings may include a bone of game, a peanut, a few grains of maize from the crop. The offering is put into the nkisi bundle. Such bags are sometimes full of small animal bones. Some *minkisi* receive small gifts when they are brought out. When the bundle is untied, for instance, some beans or peanuts are put in it before it is tied up again. Blood sacrifices can be made in minute quantities. It is sufficient, for instance, to make an incision in the comb of a rooster so that a few drops of blood drip onto the nkisi. Blood sacrifices are mostly made when a nkisi is invoked to encourage it to perform its duties. The rooster is then usually decapitated. In most cases, it must be eaten by the *banganga*, but sometimes this is forbidden and the bird is thrown on the refuse heap instead, where it may be taken by laymen. Blood sacrifices are also made during the manufacture of a nkisi. In the old days, it happened that human blood was used, for instance when nkisi Nakongo Vangu was made. Nowadays the manufacture of an important nkisi is marked by the sacrifice of a pig and one or more hens in order to grant the nkisi greater power. Similar blood sacrifices are made to purify and consecrate *minkisi* and *banganga*.

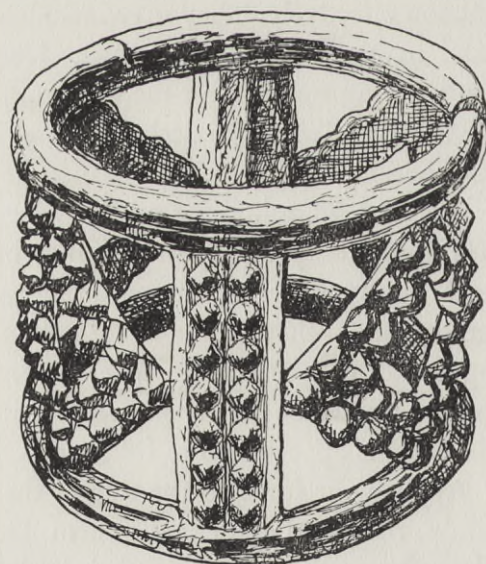


Fig. 12. Bracelet, the lower Congo (*Laman 1590*).

## CHAPTER X

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### Some Important Minkisi

Nkisi Mutadi's name comes from that of the long-tailed monkey mutadi (from the verb for speak, spy, look for). The nkisi is also referred to as Smeller-out, as attempts are made to enliven the investigating capacity and the ecstasy by smearing the nose, to the accompaniment of certain gestures, with strongly smelling herbs.

Mutadi consists of a bag (salu) with medicine in it. It is put in a sewn food-bag (nkutu) with a carrying strap, so that the nganga can carry it on his shoulder when he goes out on an errand. The nkutu-bag is closed with a wrapped ring (kikambu) that is pushed down over the two straps. Over the bag hang the skins of, inter alia, the ngondo-monkey and the long-tailed nsengi-monkey. From the side depend rattles and ndibu-bells, which the nganga uses during his investigation.

When the nganga begins his work he takes the salu bag from the nkutu-bag, draws lines crosswise on the ground (i.e. consecrates the place), takes a pinch of earth from the cross he has made, strews it over nkisi (blessing) and then spreads out two small bundles (diila). One contains chalk (the male element), the other yellow ochre (the female). In both there are different "medicines", of which the nganga takes a little, mixes them and pats himself with the mixture on either side of the belly, on the navel, the left arm, the leg and under the foot, after which he shakes his shoulders to arouse the energy to smell out properly.

He then takes a little chalk and besmears the eyes, saying: "First the chalk and I shall investigate". He now takes yellow ochre and says: "The chalk first, but yellow ochre directly afterwards. I am shy and humble (i.e. receptive for information)".

The nganga now begins his investigation. The procedure is e.g. as follows. He throws palm seeds or the flat seed cases in the nkisi between his hands while he puts different questions to himself in his mind. When he feels ecstatic twitchings or when the bead he swallowed when the nkisi was composed moves the nganga has found the right answer.

He now begins to investigate whether the nkisi belongs to the mother's, the father's or an alien kanda.

When the nganga has found where the nkisi is, he asks whether it is a land, sky or water nkisi with which the sick person is to be cured, and in this connection also mentions the medicine that is to be used. The nganga may, however, find that the ancestors of the patient

have pronounced a curse on him, and in this case the nganga summons the father's kanda, takes palm wine and goes to the grave.

If a ndoki has eaten the sick man, the nganga must ascertain which ndoki it is. As a rule the patient has dreamed of him.

If the sick person does not recover, several banganga are summoned to make a diagnosis. If the malady can be cured with known medicines the case is rather simple, for the old banganga were very skilful.

In the examination the nganga also uses various tricks. He may not himself put questions to the sufferer, but colleagues and others have done so, and they are able to pass on their information in several ways. Thus if the nganga finds the right answer to a question they may for example rattle more loudly with their rattles.

There are, however, skilful banganga who are able through their nkisi to foretell what the person who comes to consult them has on his mind without the latter saying a single word. They do this in order to show their great ability.

A nganga may seek (smell out) with Mutadi in the following ways.

By taking the small biila-bundles in the nkisi and smacking with them on his belly.

By smelling the white dog's tail (in the nkisi) upon which medicine has been smeared; if the result is positive his shoulders shake.

By scraping off a little medicine in the nkisi from the lusaku-saku herb, pumkin seed, bat's claw, landu herb, tondo fungus, ngongo bean, put it in his mouth and mix it with saliva, all of which is then spat out on one hand and rubbed and shaken between the hands. The nganga asks what it is that is "closing" the sick person, and in the event of a positive result his hands are as if locked together, so that he cannot move them or part them.

By using wooden bells when the nkutu-bag with Mutadi is hanging from the shoulders; a positive result is shown by a violent shaking of the wooden bell.

By letting the little sculpture (in the nkisi) run up and down on a string; when the result is positive the nganga's shoulders shake.

Through the lusolo seed, which points out the culprit.

Through the nganga swallowing a little lusolo seed in the presence of witnesses, pressing his stomach and straining hard until he excretes it. He then takes the seed and shows it to the one who is denying his guilt, saying: "See, you deny and deny. Behold the lusolo seed that was in the stomach has now come out!"

Through the nganga swallowing the little sculpture and excreting it in the same way as the lusolo seed.

By laying a seed of the kikumbi plant under the eyelid, seeking and seeking, rolling the eyes, stretching the neck and letting the seed fall down to point out the culprit.

Through the little sculpture, when one claps the hands together up and down or throws the sculpture from the one hand to the other, rubs it against the belly, under the arm-pits and then smells it. A positive result is shown by the nganga's shoulders shaking.

In the north the natives say also kuba suku instead of fyela, and if it is a matter of bandoki they say also "ta Ngombo" (a nkisi) or "the art of pointing out bandoki".

If it is desired to find out who has stolen, committed adultery etc., ordeal by fire is frequently resorted to, with nkisi Kisengo (iron). Also mbundu poison may be used, and for bandoki, nkasa poison. If a pig or some other chattel has been lost among the Bembe, for example at the market, one can fyela (question) in various ways. The answer may be got for instance through the rapid evacuation of a glass ball from the mouth.

Mutadi is not generally used in cases of sickness. If Mutadi's nganga falls seriously ill, other banganga are sent for, especially one who easily goes into the state of ecstasy. They first take the lemba-lemba herb (which has a calming affect) and a medicine from nkisi Mya babonso ( "everybody's nkisi"); Mutadi is then taken from its bag and they go down to the water. There they take some of these and other medicines and smear them on the one who easily goes into ecstasy, singing the while: "First the chalk, and I shall smell out". Banganga are then besmeared with chalk and yellow ochre, after which the wooden bell sounds: bwo-bwo-bwo and the rattle: wa-wakasa, wa-wakasa.

The man with the ecstatic disposition is tormented and torn. He is asked: "Shall we get medicine or not?" The ecstasy then erupts: he rushes down into the water and gets hold of some leaves under the surface. These he lays together with the lemba-lemba mixture. When this has been done all become glad and immediately run up to the sick person in the village and give him to drink of the mixture. He has to be held by strong men, for he jumps up and down and is violently torn by the ecstasy. When they see this they are glad, for they think that he is going to recover.

If, on the other hand, the ecstatically disposed person feels, when he reaches the water, that he only wants to go backwards and not into the water to get medicine, banganga are sad, for they believe that the sick person is going to die.

For the composing of Mutadi, ngudi a nganga, who has himself composed his Mutadi, must be summoned to teach the novice. Everything must be done precisely as before; first the requisite medicines are collected, then a hut is erected. A stone upon which the medicine is to be cut is placed in the hut. Palm wine and food is also procured, for everything must be in order when the paramount nganga comes.

In the Mutadi I have examined I have found 73 different objects called bilongo (from nlongo, forbidden, sacred). This term, moreover, is also used of medicines at an dispensing chemist's.

Besides chalk and yellow ochre, bilongo consist of herbs, root bulbs, seeds and fruits, cocoons of the praying mantis, copal, teeth, bones, skins of animals, stones and divers medicines from the greatest minkisi. As soon as the novice has finished mixing he swallows a little blue bead (luzimbu), a little shell, which is supposed to make him more sensitive to the manifestations during an investigation. He then makes three small heaps of gunpowder, ignites them and reads the initiation formula. This is repeated twice.

He now ties the medicines together and puts them in the nkutu-bag and goes to nseke nda (the distant land, where nkisi is completed) to sleep for three days. The novice then returns to "exalt" his nkisi. To do this he must visit a person who is able to go into the state of ecstasy. The latter is asked: "Tell us, is this a real, true nkisi or not?" The nganga

then blows upon him, blesses the medicine and spits on his back. After a while the man goes off into an ecstasy, takes the nkisi and throws it about with all the objects. Banganga immediately pick up the medicines and collect the nkisi. All bilongo have their several properties and thus help to form the nkisi's sphere of activity. When a nganga wants to use his nkisi he scrapes of (teba) a small portion of the medicines he needs. Over each medicine a formula is read, and each medicine must follow the order determined from the beginning. If the nganga takes a partridge he says: "Eh, they hatch me (find what is in me) ku bunganga" (referring to the wisdom and skill of the nganga). Over the mbidi-fruit: "They shall praise (bila) me ku bunganga". Over the ndingi-copal, which represents the lightning and through thrilling sensations in the body gives warning of danger: "Eh, they shall warn me ku bunganga". Over ndingi (stagnant water, from dingalala, which is used in cases of sickness to calm the patient): "They shall seek (dinga) me ku bunganga". Over the muzaazu-cocoon: "Eh, they shall give me luck (zaazuka), ku bunganga". Over the chalk: "I draw with the chalk, make white (i.e. make free, make healthy) and I am nganga". Over the branchy bulbs of the lusaku-saku herb (fertility, blessing): "Eh, they bless (saku-muna) me, ku bunganga". Over the bat's claw (simba): "Eh, hold on securely (simba), do not let go, ku bunganga". This is said when the nganga has got a clue in the investigation.

Mutadi's nganga must be a man. Mutadi cannot be profaned until all the nganga-novices who simultaneously composed it have died. A nganga is profaned when he does not keep nkisi's laws. He may not steal or commit adultery, nor may he be bound with ropes. If a nganga becomes unclean he must first be blessed by fellow-banganga, and at the new moon he must go for a walk (yunga) with his nkisi and bless it. If a nganga sees a fellow-nganga he must greet him by snapping his fingers.

Kisengo is the name for a nkisi — because iron is used, whether in the form of a knife, dagger or the like, in connection with ordeal by fire. The nganga ties on the musungwa-band, a ring of grass, by way of sanctification and protection against evil influence, scrapes a little medicine from lusaku-saku, kiyala and nteete and puts this in his mouth. He blesses the knife with pfu-pfu (spittle), thrusts it in the fire, on which has been laid wood from the lubota-tree. He also protects the hearth from magic influence by laying medicine in small pits round about the same. He then once more takes medicine in his mouth and spits on the fire. He strikes the brands with the knife and says to the people: "If anyone has procured for himself a great nkisi, he may not touch these brands until I have finished. I shall then desanctify it by sprinkling it with lembe-lembe herbs."

Before the nganga sets to work he takes medicine in his mouth and spits on the backs and palms of his hands. He then rubs chalk and yellow ochre on his hand, after which he rubs on juice from a banana with admixture of medicine that lies on a leaf of the lubota-tree. The leaf is rubbed and smeared on the palm of the hand, whereupon the nganga takes the knife from the fire and wipes it on his hand, after first saying to the nkisi: "May you die, may you die, may you die". Then: "Who is your brother, who is your brother, who is your brother?" He then scorches his flesh (by pressing the knife to the hand) and puts his hand in his armpit (i.e. he "hides his thought") and nkisi is living and active.

Now the nganga asks why they have fetched him. They answer: "That man has stolen, but he denies it stubbornly. If it is true, when he denies it, then tell us so." The nganga now begins to investigate by wiping the knife on his hand, saying: "If not he, if not he, kisengo shall not burn". Then he says: "Kisengo has burned the hand. If you deny again, then bring out the leg and we will strike it with the knife, for say truth, you are denying, aren't you?"

If he still denies the offence the nganga washes the leg with juice from the banana-tree and lemba-lamba medicine. He smears on chalk and yellow ochre again. Then the iron is taken from the fire and pressed with a light blow on the leg. Then the nganga says: "If it is not you, if it is not you, you (Kisengo) shall not burn the skin; but listen: if it is you, then the skin will follow the hot iron". And then he strikes with the knife to see.

Sometimes another method is used: the person persisting in his denial must take up a stone from boiling oil or water.

Mbundu is a nkisi with the same name as the plant, from which bark is scraped in order when eaten to decide disputes such as adultery, conflicts relating to loans or possessions, thievishness and so forth.

Mbundu consists of a salu bag in a nkutu-bag of pineapple. On this is hung a small wooden plate for the preparation of the mbundu-poison. It is kept in the heat in the dwelling so that the poison will not coagulate.

During the composition many phrases and songs are learned, e.g. "Nta, nta, ngo, ngo madyomina kaaka" (whole dives). Then they sing: "The grasshopper has not been tested, e yaa, buma (torment) father. Ta Mbundu. E, buma, taat'e-e".

Entering the composition of Mbundu's bilongo are, besides "the usual" ingredients also diiza cactus, a little nkasa-bark, mbundu-bark, chalk and yellow ochre.

Formerly, mbundu was used to expose bandoki; nowadays nkasa is used for this purpose. The two poisons have come from the south, from the coast.

When the nganga begins his ceremony he dedicates himself by drawing mamoni-lines on his face and crying: "Nta, nta, ngo, ngo, madyomina kaaka". Then Malolo's song is sung and lines are drawn on nteela mbundu (the one who is to drink mbundu and through his reactions show whether the person denying the offence is guilty or not). Nteela mbundu is appointed from among the younger people, and there is bargaining concerning his payment until he is satisfied and undertakes to drink.

The mbundu-poison is then prepared on Mbundu's wooden plate with a small addition of diiza-cactus, nkasa-bark and palm wine.

At first the parties in the case are summoned to make their declarations. The accused begins, saying e.g.: "If I have committed fornication with you, may I be guilty of it night and day, Mbundu, then he has not urinated for me. Mbundu ko, e, buma. But if I have not committed fornication, then urinate for me. Eh, Mbundu nengo, vengula (to the side) liberate". Then the other must make his declaration, whereupon the nganga sings: "E, the grasshopper has not been tested, e yaa, buma father", and spins around nteela mbundu.

Nteela mbundu takes his mbundu medicine and moves his belly as it were in waves like



the nsombe-grub, dances and shakes with the medicine. In the meantime they sing Malolo's song. Through his movements he presses his belly and squeezes hard.

If the party who has denied the offence wins, then nteela mbundu moves his loin-cloth to the side and urinates in front of all the people; even if his sister or mother-in-law were there it would not be considered shameful. The cleared party is glad, and fires many salvos to the accompaniment of the milolo-cries of the men and women present.

If, on the other hand, he should lose, nteela mbundu lies prostrate on his back with rigid limbs like one dead. The nganga goes up to him and turns him three times, stretches out his fingers and says: "loosen up, loosen up", blows in his ears, squeezes juice from stalks of munkwisa to give nteela mbundu to drink and hits him with mikubulu bags until he is free of the torment.

The test may also take the form of nteela mbundu walking to and fro over lines drawn on the ground. If the party denying the offence is guilty he tramps on the line. But several marks are made, and if he can "manage" the marks he must return backwards. If he is telling the truth he will be victorious also at the last mark. Otherwise he will tremble and fall to the ground. He must then be quickly struck with the tails of wild cats so that he may come to his senses.

Nteela mbundu thus decides the dispute by urinating and becoming well or "being forced to the ground" by the same.

One variant is Mbundu ya nkangudi (a pot), which has a greater magic effect. It is put on the fire and into it are placed a copper ring, a dingongo-bean, chewed palm-seed oil and resin of nsafu, which catches fire and burns when held over the fire. The person who is able to take the hot ring or bean is declared innocent.

Nkondi (from konda, lie in wait for, intercept, lie in ambush for game) is a common name for a kind of minkisi with large sculptures in which pieces of iron are often hammered in for the swearing of oaths and concluding of alliances etc. In certain tracts Nkondi is also called Nkoni (the smasher or lion).

Nkondi may be accounted as belonging to land, water and sky nkisi, for he eats in the sky, on the earth and at water.

On account of different compositions, with consequently different "fields of activity", there are several Nkondi variants, such as e.g. Nkondi a mungundu (a sawing bird), Nkondi a mantuku (that attacks the organs of respiration), Nkondi ya nkoma (into which bits of iron are struck), Nkondi a kiko kya nkuni (sculpture with load of wood as a sign of pressure over the body), Nkondi ya mfyedila (with which one smells out), Nkondi ya ntilumuka (that flies, seizes in the woods, in the trees), Nkondi ya nsanda (that spreads small scabby sores), Nkondi mamba (water-Nkondi) and Nkondi Mbenza (that belongs to the Mbenza cult) and others.

Nkondi is characterized chiefly by large sculptures of various shape; sometimes two are put together back to back, the one male and the other female. Sometimes the sculptures are smaller or even very tiny; they are then referred to as Nkondi's children. They are often given as amulets to a sick person who has been treated, a male one for a man, a female

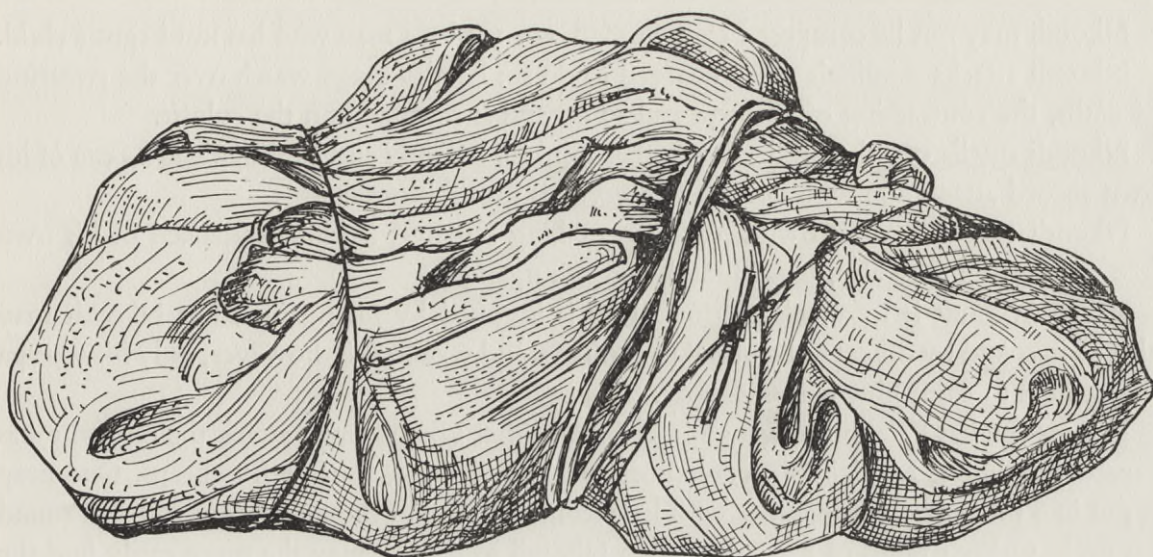


Fig. 13. Nkisi Nkondi ya nsanda, Sundi in Lolo (Laman 1359).

one for a woman. The sculptures look like a human being; a hollow is, however, carved out in the belly and in this is placed the medicine, the "heart", which is covered and held fast by resin. In the resin is often stuck a little knife as the navel. This must not be moved. Finally, the sculpture is clad in a loin-cloth.

Nkondi is kept in a handsomely plaited ntete-basket. It has its own little house in which it stands in a corner.

On the "flying Nkondi" or Mukwanga are hung mayimbi-hawk feathers, which are its servants. It reveals itself in dreams by e.g. alighting as mayimbi on the head of a sleeping child, plucking its feathers, shaking them off onto the child, digging its claws into its legs and trying to take it away; but then the child cries.

Nkondi Me (me, a synonym for mwe, mwene=master) Mamba or Me Mbenza is composed if anyone is afflicted with the vomiting of blood and epilepsy, or dies quite suddenly. A pig is then sacrificed and its blood given Nkondi to drink. The pig dies suddenly if ngudi a nganga shows makukwa-stones to the pig and strikes them six times on the ground. This is the nlunguzi (guardian, protector) of the village. It is then carried to the water, where there is another nlunguzi. They lay two big nkwala mats on the water and ngudi a nganga blesses the corners of the mat, saying: "Father, stick, sticking beads, fasten, fasten". Then the mat sticks to the water and cannot sink. Nkondi and a small stone are placed on it, whereupon those who are going to make the medicine sit down. None of them becomes wet.

Nkondi is composed with medicine from bakisi babonso (all minkisi), the public medicine that is to be found in a bundle in larger villages and from which a travelling nganga may take medicine if he has not got his nkisi with him. The most essential part which is most used is the sculpture, for a nkuyu-spirit is incorporated in it.

The days preceding the composition are like a great feast with drum, song and dance as well as quantities of food and drink, for a great crowd of people foregather to watch.

Nkondi may not be composed by a woman, nor yet by a man who has not begot a child. Nkondi attacks criminals when charged to do so; he also keeps watch over the swearing of oaths, the contracting of alliances and so on and is revenged on the culprit.

Nkondi smells out the misdeeds of other *minkisi*, *bandoki* and *bankuyu* and he can of his own accord attack one who does not observe his prohibitions etc.

Nkondi can also of his own accord stop taking revenge; if he has attacked of his own free volition he may also, like *Mutadi*, cure his *nganga*.

When Nkondi is to attack a criminal he is invoked by his *nganga*; but Nkondi may also be invoked by others to be urged to swiftness and wrath. It is, however, only his *nganga* that is able to calm him with sedatives.

If someone has fallen ill a *nganga* is sent for so that Nkondi may attack the one who has caused the illness. Medicine is scraped off and laid in three, four or five heaps. One heap is put in a piece of cloth together with hair from the head of the sick person and tied round his neck. Other strands of hair are tied on Nkondi so that he may the more easily find the one who is tormenting the sick man. The other heaps are burned in the evening at the entrance to the village. The people then cry: "Wihu" to prevent other evil powers from tormenting the sick person.

In case of theft neither medicine nor hair is needed; the *nganga* just takes a bit of something the thief has dropped or a pinch of earth where he has trodden. This is bound to Nkondi, and the *nganga* blesses it by spitting on it. The *nganga* does not need to invoke Nkondi, but leaves everything to him. If the suit is a matter of a loan the accused takes a leaf of a dwarf palm and goes with this to the *nganga*, who ties the leaf to Nkondi, blesses the *nkisi* and shows it the way it is to go to attack.

If anyone is unjustly forced to pay a sum he visits a *nganga* with a bit of what he has paid so that the *nganga* may bind this to Nkondi, who then finds the way he is to go.

If something, e.g. a palm, a *nsafu*-tree, a field or anything else, has had a spell put upon it they go to Nkondi, burn medicine, bless it and show it the road on which *bandoki* come, exclaiming: "Wihu! You *Mavwala*, you *Makoto* (names of Nkondi), do you not hear? It is these fields we are showing you. It is we who work here. Wherever the spell-binder has gone, only follow, so that he will fall down from the palm, fall over or tumble down from the *nsafu*-tree. You *Mavwala*, only follow".

If anyone is to take *nkasa*-poison Nkondi's *nganga* comes and adjures the accused so that *bandoki* may not enter, for if the accused has not the magic gland he shall go free.

To promise, swear or certify something by Nkondi's name is called "eating" Nkondi. Thus, for instance, the *nganga* novices must swear by Nkondi not to betray what they have been taught. When the novice or some other person makes a promise he immediately takes Nkondi and licks his eye, brow, corner of eye, the heart, or the shoulders, saying: "I shall not mention it to anyone, Nkondi vengo" (turn aside, do not attack). *Banganga* answer: "Ti vengo (he turns aside). But if I mention it, father Nkondi, what shall you do to me? Eat me, attack me!"

Many such oaths are sworn before Nkondi.

Those who belong to the same kanda do not swear by Nkondi; different makanda make promises to each other by both parties cutting off a little hair from the head, putting the hairs together and tying them to Nkondi, saying: "If either now attacks the other, Nkondi, you must not neglect to attack him".

If anyone is accused as ndoki he may deny it before Nkondi. Nkondi's nganga then takes a plate, blesses it, draws stripes on it with chalk and yellow ochre and puts medicine on it to wash Nkondi's brow, eyes and heart, then stirs these bilongo on the plate. The accused then stretches forth his hands with the following conjuration: "Is it I? If it is I who is eating him, Nkondi, what shall you then do to me? Eat me!" The nganga then makes him drink of the medicine. Ngudi a nganga then tastes Nkondi's medicine, after which he lets the accused drink. He now hands Nkondi to him so that he may lick the eye, brow and heart. He must also strike it against his own forehead and say: "You must give me a headache, you must make me dizzy in the head, you must throw me in the fire, and if I climb up a palm, you must fling me down". He then strikes himself on the breast with it, saying: "Close, fix my ribs hard in my chest, make me gasp for breath, but I do not know how to eat another. Nkondi vengo, do not attack me". Banganga: "He turns aside".

When Nkondi is used as a smeller out the nganga has a whisk (mpiya) with which he works. The whisk and nkondi are besmeared with blood from a sacrificed hen. Nkondi is also washed with the mansusu-herb so that his "heart" may get courage and strength to say what it has seen and knows.

Nkondi attacks as nkuyu and ndoki with soreness in the body and shivering fits etc. He may also attack in the palms, so that the tapper tumbles down. If a snake has bitten a person this is Nkondi who has been on the scene, and the same applies if a woman cuts herself with the hoe or is unable to be delivered of her child although she has not been dissolute.

Nkondi can himself attack anyone in the kanda who has been guilty of an offence, provided he has "eaten" or "drunk" Nkondi, i.e. sworn by Nkondi.

Nkondi also attacks when he has been sent by a nganga. If a person dreams Nkondi-dreams he knows that Nkondi has attacked him or is about to do so. The dreams refer to grass fires or something else that is burning, e.g. the house or the loin-cloth. Sometimes the dream may be about storm and rain or to the effect that one is flying in the air, or the dreamers may be stabbing each other with knives or shooting at each other.

Nkondi stops attacking if people say to the nganga that his Nkondi has attacked them in the village. If they have received something unjustly, however, they must first quickly settle the matter for the sake of the sick person. When this has been done the nganga sprinkles Nkondi to make him leave the sick person. For this the nganga must have palm wine and good payment. When he has been paid the nganga takes a mug of palm wine. First Nkondi must drink; the nganga pours the wine over his mouth and says: "They have given good strong palm wine in hundreds and sheep, ducks and hens in hundreds" (this so that Nkondi may quickly leave the sick person). Then the nganga himself drinks and takes away the peg that Nkondi received when they invoked him. The nganga now takes

a piece of cloth, lays Nkondi on the ground and covers his face with the cloth. He makes a lembe-lembe medicine with palm wine, water and salt. This the nganga pours on Nkondi's heart and navel. He then gives the medicine to the person who "owns" the sick man so that he may drink. He says: "Go and give the sick man to drink. Get well, better, still, be calm. I cure a sick person and not a corpse".

The one who "owns" the sick man goes and lays Nkondi's stick at the foot of a mulumbi-tree or throws it into the water. The sick person then becomes better, and when the "owner" arrives he gives medicine to his charge. The latter drinks. A part of the medicine is boiled for him, and when he falls asleep and sweat begins to pour it is apparent that Nkondi has abandoned him. If he has been guilty of a serious crime the nganga does not take away the stick, but lets him die.

If Nkondi's nganga needs to be treated by Nkondi the procedure is as follows: another nganga fetches medicine in water in the state of ecstasy (cf. nkisi Mutadi).

Sharpened sticks, knife-blades, iron pins (luvuya, plural mpuya) etc. may be hammered into Nkondi in order to make him more effective, for as soon as he is wounded he acts like a human being, who recoils and wonders what it can be. He at once understands the connection. He likewise understands the road that has been indicated if some hair from the head or some other attribute has been tied to him. Sometimes hammered in objects remain, to protect one who has previously been attacked from renewed attack.

One may abuse and insult Nkondi to exasperate his wrath and zeal.

Nkondi is used in many other ways, e.g. to lead mother and child out of the home for the first time, to see the roads to the village and go to the field etc.

Nkondi Me Mvuma (mvuma=rainbow; but mvuma may also mean potato) attacks the pigs.

Nkondi is profaned when the medical heart disappears or when his nganga dies, for then the nkuyu-spirit has left him.

Nkondi is likewise profaned if he is knocked over. But then all those who have foregathered in the village must lie down on the ground. Those who are away in the forest must not come back to the village until a pig has been killed and Nkondi has drunk of its blood. Nkondi is then to be lifted up and all the others get up and eat of the pig and of bonzo and myemo medicines. After this, all the houses and inhabitants of the village are to be besprinkled and the nganga says: "Calm yourself, Sir Nkondi, do not be angry with your little bandeketi (younger brothers)".

The nganga may not eat anything roasted, such as e.g. nsafu, palm seeds, potatoes, peanuts or crabs. These must be boiled. But if anything happens to boil over he may not eat it.

One who has been afflicted with cramp or epilepsy may not look on while an animal is being slaughtered. He must not drink anything while standing; he must not eat anything that has boiled over or been peppered while the pot was on the fire; nor may he answer to cries in the forest except by clapping his hands.

When the wife of a nganga is pregnant she must be clad in a Nkondi child. If she has been taken by Nkondi the child must be called Nkondi's child. Together they must be

consecrated with a fowl, and this, too, is called Nkondi's child. The child and the fowl are brethren and grow up together. If anyone throws stones at the fowl he also throws stones at the child. The nurse must bathe both the child and the fowl. The fowl may not be sold or killed. If it is a hen, all the chicks are to be given to the paramount nganga.

Nkosi (the smasher, the lion) belongs to the same family as Nkondi, but they are composed rather differently. When ngudi a nganga initiates the novices three or four women are appointed as assistants. They must collect mbota-leaves and with these fan the fire on which the pot with medicines stands. The fire may not be blown.

Into the pot are put leaves of the mbota-tree, nsangi-creepers, mfilu, nlolo and raffia-bast etc. When the pot begins to sputter, those who are so predisposed fall into ecstatic convulsions.

In the morning they take the raffia-bast (which is the name given to all the medicine in the pot) and bind it on the arms of the villagers in the lusanga shed. All those who during the boiling fell into ecstasy must compose Nkosi. Their assistants are referred to as Samba and Maleeka. They have also to cook food for the novices (bizongo).

Nkosi is composed in six stages. In the first stage the whisk (mpya), in the second two molluscs with chalk and salt etc., in the third two manya-calabashes with chalk and tukula red etc., in the fourth a kimbangu-basket with stones, crooked roots of trees and the like, which in this connection become bankita, in the fifth the nsiba pipe with hair and nails in, and in the sixth mbwanga-amulets with medicine.

They then take the fishes of the rivers, the animals of the grass and the frogs of the springs by naming each by name and putting them in packets. The novices must then smell out, feel and mention the names of each fish and frog in the packets. Older banganga have taught them the names.

Ngudi a nganga now hides in a nearby village so that the novices may try to smell him out. But in this connection, too, they are helped by others.

Nkisi Kula (the pursuer) is a type of that class of great minkisi that subdue bankuyu-spirits and bandoki.

When Kula is being composed great feasts are held, with food, an abundance of palm wine, singing and dancing to the accompaniment of drums, rattles and trumpets. Besides medicines and a number of magical objects, also the spirit of a deceased person must be incorporated with nkisi Kula, represented as a sculpture that always accompanies this nkisi. Sometimes human bones are taken, but generally the natives are wary of these, for they may arouse desire to become bandoki, i.e. to eat human beings, which is the greatest crime in the community.

Apart from the general medicines, I have found in Kula (a large bundle), inter alia, the following: a hen's foot, foot of a partridge, hoof of the nkabi-antelope, claw of giant lizard, head or fore-feet of shrew-mouse, mpingi-mouse, kanza and mpidi snakes and other venomous snakes. These represent the qualities of the beasts in question, such as e.g. swiftness, the ability to dart into the smallest hole, pugnacity, ability to kill quickly and so forth, all of which qualities are needed for Kula to be able to pursue the evil spirit to the grave.

To Kula belong several small cloth bags. Some are filled with chalk, others with yellow ochre or red dye mixed with medicine, sometimes also with very smarting red pepper. With these bags the body is struck and massaged, so that the pepper penetrates the skin and renders uneasy the spirit that has possessed the sick person. The spirit is extremely afraid of pepper, for if it eats of it, it will become a human being again.

To Kula belong also small packets of medicine (*makuta*), which are used as protection against *bankuyu*-spirits. They are sold in the market-places among the *Bwende*.

Kula is further equipped with magic guns, which are made as very small *nduba*-mouse traps. They are loaded with magic bullets and as a rule with gunpowder to shoot the spirits and *bandoki* if they should approach.

In Kula there is always an ancestral image that is very well made and consecrated with all sorts of medicines. In this is a spirit that has been taken from the grave of a well-known, powerful *ndoki*.

Kula's sculptures are clad in the cloth of former periods, they have *bikandu*-amulets, hair which is called *hungi*, *binsungwa*-patterns and on the back side tattooings in *makumbi*-patterns. Kula has a staff in his hand and a knife to cut off staminate flowers from the palm (for tapping), brow-band, plaited *nzoki*-tassel and *nsemba zantende* (leaves of a small palm). On the belly they have tried to make a *nswela*-belt of European cloth (*va kinkanga*), under which are three *kumbi*-patterns, and on the breasts and the brow *kumbi*-patterns. On the shoulder-blade two *bingembo*-patterns and *makumbi*, on the ear *kumbi*-pattern, in the hair plaited strands of hair and a cord with hair and cut medicine; above *binzinza*.

Kula has clenched fists or hands well tied together, *teke*-stripes (tattooing) and *kumbi*-patterns on the face, *binzinza* on the nape of the neck, a mound (hair) on the crown of the head, dots of *kumbi*-pattern on the back, and elsewhere other tattooings in *kumbi*-patterns.

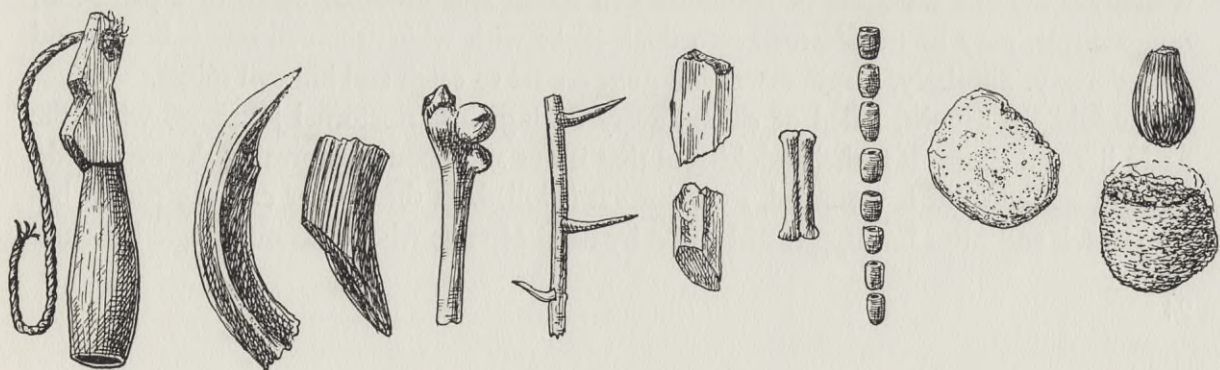
A Kula in the shape of a virgin has beads under the arm-pit, tattooings round the waist and *bibaka*-pattern on the back.

A female Kula has a child on her back that desires and is glad at the flesh that the mother is going to seek out. On her head she has a *mpidi*-basket in which to carry meat (*bundeki*), on the breast *binsungwa*-pattern, on the belly a large *kumbi*-pattern, round the waist tattooing of a hip-band, to the right *kumbi*-pattern, underneath *nsabi*-chest carved with *kumbi*-patterns, to the left *nsongo zakumbi*-pattern.

Kula is as a rule composed by several novices simultaneously, each making his sculpture and medicine bag with appurtenant objects. Much work is involved and the procuring of all the accessories is a costly business.

When the novices have finished cutting the medicine they must be sponged with *makunya*-nettles and red pepper all over the body. This is followed by a pepper-vapour bath in the house, plenty of pepper being thrown on the fire and all the apertures in the house being closed.

When the novices leave the house they are sweating profusely and their eyes are inflamed and angry.





When they go to the grave to take the nkuyu-spirit they carry with them a feast to soften his heart and let himself be taken. When the food has been set down on the grave, banganga withdraw to await events. As often as not, however, they look to see whether nkuyu is beginning to eat. Last of all ngudi a nganga keeps watch and succeeds in catching the spirit. He calls for help to bind it or put it in the bast-cloth to be incorporated with the "heart" of the sculpture. Sometimes a little cricket or grasshopper represents the spirit, in which case it is placed in the sculpture.

Ngudi a nganga also teaches the novices to "take the sun". They look at it for a long time as it is setting and then screw up their eyes tightly. When they open them again there is a shimmering before their eyes, so that they have taken the sun. It is always whole, and represents health or a whole soul.

Kula is composed in many cases towards evening, when bankuyu fly out from the graves.

For the Kula sculpture are sacrificed fowls whose blood is allowed to drip down on the same.

Kula's main function is to chase away evil spirits and bandoki that want to "eat" human beings, cattle or other property. To avert such disasters and annihilate all evil designs there are in Kula a number of objects having a special capacity to ward off or denounce the deeds of the wicked. They are referred to as bikandu (means of protection). Some of them may be adduced here.

The fruits of a very thorny plant are bound together and placed in the earth; if any ndoki tramps upon them he is magically pricked by the thorns and falls ill.

A knife is blessed and placed under the bed at the head end when the owner of the bed lies down to sleep. In the morning it is removed, for in the day-time protection is assured by drawing lines with chalk and yellow ochre around the eyes or at the corners of the eyes.

A couple of small makuta-bags are fastened to the corners of a person's mantle, or they are hung up in the house, in the corners. Pepper bags are also used. These are as a rule hung round the neck.

One takes the head of a metallicly gleaming lizard, puts medicine in it and thrusts it into the earth somewhere in the village. On the approach of anyone harbouring evil designs the lizard rushes into the body and tears to pieces its internal parts.

Similarly, the head of a dog may be taken. This is treated magically and put into the earth in a suitable place to bite and chase away the ndoki who chances to tramp thereon.

In the same way the natives take the heads of other animals or parts of different objects which are able to ward off or neutralize evil spirits and bandoki. Strips of a palm-leaf, for example, may be transformed into thick sticks with which the evil one is beaten and chased away. Similarly, magic snares and guns are set to catch and kill evil spirits.

Bandoki are caught, killed or chased away during their nocturnal journeys, when the body lies and sleeps. It is their ndoki-soul that is out and about performing the evil deeds. Sometimes the spirit is wounded, sometimes it is killed. In the former case the person becomes sick and must be cupped and cured by nkisi Mpodi, who sucks out magic balls and

shots. In the later case, again, the person dies a sudden death and it is then said that he has been shot by Kula's guns.

Kula's nganga must first ascertain whether the sick person has been struck by Kula's power or not. With Kula's sculpture he tries to fyedila, as also with Mutadi's. If Kula's nganga is not ecstatically gifted, one or more of those having this gift are summoned. In response to the nganga's exhortation the ecstatic smeller out tries to make clear whether the illness has been caused by Kula or some other nkisi or ndoki. As soon as the smeller out has posed a question that leads towards the right road he gets ecstatic spasms.

If it is Kula that has been revenged on the sick person the latter is first given medicine to drink and to smear himself with, after which the treatment proper begins.

Kula's nganga procures the help of those who easily fall into ecstasy and of the kanda of the sick man to help with the singing and invocation. The sick man is in the meantime massaged from head to foot with banana-stalks. This is done in order to squeeze out the spirit that has possessed him. Sometimes they feel how the spirit squirms and tries to escape. In this it is sometimes successful. They must then begin again, in order to force it to a finger or the tip of a toe or to the mouth. After much trouble they succeed in grabbing the spirit, and the nganga ties it up in a piece of bast-cloth he has with him. The spirit can then be heard whining and lamenting in the piece of cloth. This is the nganga who is secretly imitating it. Frequently the nganga has previously caught a little animal, which he kills with his knife, afterwards showing the blood to the relatives of the sick man, who are greatly astonished thereat.

Sometimes the spirit rushes out before it can be grasped — e.g. into another person, into a dog, a hen or tree and so forth. There then ensues a wild hunt for the spirit in the village, in the houses, on the plain, on roads and paths, indeed, everywhere, right to some hole in the earth or to the graves, where it slips in. The nganga immediately stops up the hole with his bast-cloth or with Kula. He then loads a real gun and fires a shot into the hole. After this he puts gunpowder and red pepper in, blocks up the hole again and goes home.

On his arrival home the nganga prepares medicine for the sick person and leaves with him some small bags as protection. Sometimes the sculpture of Kula is left to guard the sick man so that the spirit shall not return.

Furthermore, certain prohibitions are laid down which must be observed by the sick man and his relatives. No-one, for instance, may come and borrow fire or take a brand where the sick person is lying; nor may anyone crack or shell peanuts or chop wood after dark. None may answer in the night if anyone calls. If anyone is forced to say something he must speak silently and first clap a few times dully or sharply with his hands. If the sick man hears something knocking or thudding outside the door, he may not ask what this is.

If the spirit should hide itself in the house, the nganga puts a pot with red pepper etc. on the fire. When the pot boils, the nganga stirs the contents, so that the smell of the pepper penetrates everywhere in the house. The spirit may then seek refuge in a mug or basket.

The nganga immediately covers it with the bast-cloth, afterwards puncturing the spirit and throwing it into running water.

Formerly it was attempted to cure sleeping sickness with Kula medicine and with blows or massaging with mikubulu medicine (pepper bags). First, however, small cuts were made in the skin so that the medicine should penetrate.

Kula is also used to try and prevent rain. The nganga takes chalk, ndimba-red and yellow ochre and draws mamoni-lines on the forehead. He then cuts up medicine, puts it into his mouth and spits it towards the threatening clouds. He places three heaps of gunpowder on a stone and the mikubulu-bags beside it. When the powder goes off nawu-wu he swings the bags in the smoke from the powder, takes the mbambi pipe and blows nange-nge (proudly), fires a shot, takes stones and hangs them up in the house. He then blesses the yard broom, loin-cloth and mantle and swings it in the sky. With the broom he stirs up the dust, the storm comes and the clouds grow lighter.

If the rain comes nevertheless, the nganga says: "Mother rain came before me, I came too late", and he collects his minkisi. If rain falls he says: "I have called, it is thundering".

Mpodi (who sucks out, from vola) is an old nkisi that is used for various purposes, but above all through cupping to suck out bullets, stones and so forth with which someone has been wounded in war, bankita that torment people, or to suck to oneself in a magical way another's property.

Mpodi's nganga must submit to certain tests to show that he has the courage to suck out anything at all. He must, among other things, eat dung and human excrement and drink water in which menstruating women have washed. He must also suck away blood or pus from the most horrible sores. For ordinary treatment a horn of the mvudi-antelope is used, a hole being made in the upper end.

During the composition, when the novices are foregathered in the house, ngudi a nganga fires a shot for them and they fall down dead. They are laid in the laps of their wives. When the latter have confessed their adulteries they stand up and the stones with which they have been shot are sucked out. The nganga also eats of their blood and manioc, and the people shudder to behold this. The mixture of medicine with earth on which women have urinated is stirred up and put in the salu bag; the novices must afterwards drink it. Those who have been wounded in war must also drink of it.

Mpodi consists of a very large bundle with all sorts of ordinary bilongo; but in addition there are a mpodi-knot, a whisk clad with squirrel's skin or skin of ngola mamba (large fish, otter; LDKF, p. 690), maskinda-amulets that are bound on the arms when the novices begin to compose Mpodi, mikubulu medicine bags and mbwanga-bags, which are used as amulets for the sick person when he has been treated.

Mpodi has two sculptures. They are easily recognized as there is a tooth of the nduutu-mouse in Mpodi's medical heart. The sculptures are called Mabuta, "who strikes" (buta), "steals from" and Mayungi "who puts a spell upon" (yungulanga); a heart is attached with gum in the middle of the belly. In the heart there is medicine and something living from

land or water, e.g. an ant or water-grub, thus representing land or water nkita, for the sculptures have nkita-power.

In one sculpture I have found bits of metallicly gleaming beetles. They serve as mirrors to find bandoki etc. When the nkuyu-spirit sees such a mirror he gets terrified, for it glitters. In later times a bit of glass or mirror was stuck in the "heart" of the sculpture.

The heart often contains a kumbi-seed, which resembles the beautiful eye of nkuku a mpela (*Centropus senegalensis*). The seed is only an ornament, like porcelain buttons and other comparable things. Teeth of the guinea-mouse are placed there because the latter can bite off and go. The legs of the sculpture are crooked, for the nkuyu-spirit has crooked legs. If they were straight they would resemble the legs of a corpse. As a rule the sculpture is holding its hands on its belly, as it is difficult to make sculptures holding their arms otherwise and in that case they are easily broken off. The sculptures are generally clad in a piece of kilamba-cloth of raffia-bast. Sometimes the sculpture may have a nsanga-calabash with mbwela-beads, thus the ornament of a virgin. Sometimes it is holding its hands over the head to show grief. The sculptures are female and are placed on either side of the sick person. By way of sacrifice, blood is not infrequently smeared on the mouths of the sculptures so that they may drink it. Blood from cupping is commonly used.

The sculptures are kept in the salu bag which lies in a knitted nkutu-bag. The sick person is struck with the mikubulu-bags, or else he is allowed to keep them as amulets and smell them. They may not be bought like Kula's makuta.

Mbwanga is the protective amulet for the novices and banganga.

The mpiya-whisk is used for smelling out.

Mpodi's knot (kolo) contains medicine which was cut off and thrown away when Mpodi was being composed. When the knots have been prepared they are tied on by a father of twins and by ngudi a nganga. The novices and ngudi a nganga then have a tugo-war. If the latter wins, the novices must redeem the knot with possessions. If the novices win, they fire shots and utter milolo cries.

In the composition the mbwanga-amulets are generally made first, and afterwards the zandu medicine-bag, the mikubulu-bags and the sculptures at nseke nda (the place of manufacture for nkisi) near water, in order to take the ngola mamba-otter as kinkonko-animal.

Mpodi is used to cure aching all over the body. This feels as if something is biting, stinging and cutting. It is bankita that have attacked the sick person. He is then rubbed with muntomina and lemba-lamba medicines. The nganga then uses the cupping horn to take away the bankita in the blood. The wound is smeared with medicine from the salu bag, chewed nzo-pepper and gunpowder that have been thoroughly mixed. Sometimes bankita are taken by massaging with leaves that have been softened at the fire. This is done in the state of ecstasy, when the nganga gets hold of nkita.

In order to cure an old wound that refuses to heal the nganga cups at the side of this, to take away what is biting (aching). A mixture of muntomina medicine is also used.

In case of violent toothache the patient must drink a medicine that he has first poured

into his mouth, after which cuts in the skin are made and the sufferer is cupped to remove bankita.

Mpodi is also used in connection with cupping to take away living things in the blood, to suck out bullets and the like when a person has been wounded in war or been hit by Kula's guns; and finally, to put a spell on all kinds of possessions.

If someone has been wounded in war, the nganga must first suck out stones and bullets with his mouth, after which he gives lembalemba medicine and rubs muntomina mixture on the wound. One who has been hit with Kula's magic guns must be cupped and the small stones be sucked out, after which treatment with medicine is given.

When the nganga has finished cupping or sucking he shows what has been eating the sick man to the latter's relatives, e.g. nsalafu-ants, worms, hymenoptera or stinging grubs, all of which the nganga has in readiness to slip into the cupped blood.

If anyone has been given poisoned food he is given a nditu-vapour bath and must also drink croton oil, when he will soon enough excrete everything.

Banganga try to exploit Mpodi to put a spell upon or attract to themselves others' possessions that they covet. They must in this case find out whether the goods are protected by Mpodi or some other nkisi, for if this is so they will immediately be attacked when they try to put a spell upon them. If they are not so protected they try to gain what they desire with the requisite ritual acts. Thus a nganga may say to himself, for instance: "I want to have these things (pigs, goats, peanuts, cloth etc.). I take them. They suit me. I take them in my heart. Now they shall follow me." This is accompanied with a gesture with the hand, as if taking the articles into his lap. Soon enough they become his property. Sometimes he stretches out his hand secretly and takes what he desires with his magic power. He is also able to take with his eyes, indeed, with his foot and toes, by kicking what he wants to have. As soon as in this way he thinks he has got power over something and taken it, he goes home and vomits it up, for then he places it in his house.

If the nganga himself does not have any benefit from it, it nonetheless has a spell upon it and is destroyed. The cloth will be moth-eaten. The domestic animals lose weight and no-one wants to buy them; or they even fall down and die. Peanuts and manioc etc. become dry and poor and give but little harvest.

In the same way also a child may be taken by passers-by, if some wise person is not at hand. They give e.g. peanuts to a child. If it accepts them and eats them, its soul is caught. Either the child will soon fall ill, or it will undergo a change of heart and conduct.

If a "wise" person is near he will immediately ask whether people have passed. "Yes." "Are they far away?" "No." He runs after them till he finds them. He calls out to them to stop, and wants to have a look in their nkutu-bags. A cockroach may perhaps tumble to the ground. He picks it up and returns to the village, drops it on the child's body and its soul will return. The child recovers.

Since Mpodi is able to attract to himself all kinds of chattels, he is also able to protect his own and others' belongings through all sorts of protective means.

Mpodi mputu derives from the mboma-snake and the mubaku-animal (mongoose), which



Fig. 15. *Nkisi Kula Mansanga ma Lunguwadi, Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 531). B, Sculpture of an ancestor, Bemba in Kolo (Laman 507).*

the first nganga saw in a dream. Some use Mpodi mputu to put into the mouth of the sick person instead of cupping with the ordinary Mpodi.

Mpodi mputu first came to his country through water, the hearth and the road to the village. In these places he has his abode when he is not showing himself to someone in dreams. As a nkisi his place is on a hook or in the roof above the door.

The nkisi has two sculptures and a salu bag hung with nsakala rattles in a nkutu-bag.

In connection with the composition, which may take a whole season, there is a great feast with food and drink in the intervals between the different phases of the work. Everything, however, takes place in the dark and to the accompaniment of singing. At dawn

a brother and sister are tied together by the leg and then made to go down to the water to fetch the medicine and a snake. This may be a creeper. It is placed in the salu bag.

Banganga eat and drink on the shore, while the novices, blindfolded, eat a dish of human ordure. Other ceremonies resemble those occurring in connection with the ordinary Mpodi.

After the composition, blood from the hearts of a pig and a fowl are smeared on all the sculptures, gunpowder is burned and mikolo cries uttered. Finally, earth from the village roads and puffs of air from the sunset are put in the salu bag.

Banganga are not permitted to eat ntooba-stew or tutu-mice; nor may they shell peanuts in the evening.

The person subjected to treatment may not shell peanuts in the dark; he may not make a light with new fire, nor drink palm wine with nku-nku-worms; nor may he permit a menstruating woman to enter the house.

As a sign of dignity Mpodi's nganga has a Calabar bean threaded on a string tied round his upper arm.

Mpodi mputu has three male and two female assistants, viz., Makyoma, Munlongo and Muntanda, and Mabeeta and Mayunga respectively. They have also other names, as for example Nkwelo for a female assistant.

The female assistants fall into ecstasy and dance with the small sculptures, sometimes holding them with their hands, sometimes in their mouths. They wash them as if they were human, and give them names when they sing.

Bigger Mpodi are composed at the chief's house, smaller ones out in the villages. Mpodi is not invoked with nloko and does not restore the soul.

When the composition is finished, Mpodi must point out the one among the novices who is ndoki. Ngudi a nganga says to the people: "Come and see now how the examination for ndoki is concluded". He loads a gun and says to the novices: "Line up in a row! Come closer!" The nganga aims at them with the gun, lowers it, takes aim again and lowers the gun again, repeating this several times, saying finally: "Hold still! The shot goes off in ko-o-o". No-one has been hit. No-one is a ndoki. For the people often regard Mpodi's banganga as bandoki with makundu-glands.

No patient is allowed to eat the head or neck of mpudi-fish, beans, ntondya-fish or a stew of leaves etc.

For steam-baths the natives use, inter alia, leaves of mfilu, nlolo, mansusu and other plants with a pungent odour. Into the vapour bath is placed also a centipede and the like to show everyone what has been plaguing the patient. The people often try to confuse banganga by asking them to smell out things that they do not know about, e.g. to find the whereabouts of something that is lost. Banganga who are able to carry out such commissions are much honoured and revered.

Mbumba is a very ancient, well-known and feared nkisi. Like the majority of the oldest minkisi it was used for different purposes, whereas the later minkisi are more specialized. Mbumba is able to tense the stomach, so that a person vents evil-smelling belches, he makes the spleen swell, makes the mind uneasy, causes people to vomit, feel heavy and suffer

from pressure from tumours in the body and so forth. Mbumba is therefore also able to create foetuses and protruding bellies. Further, Mbumba causes blood blisters, swollen and achings legs, severe diarrhoea, cancer of the stomach and the like. Mbumba is used generally as a means of protection against the influence and evil deeds of wicked spirits and bandoki.

Mbumba derives from the lunsoko-nsoko-otter, which is also the nganga's kinkonko-animal.

Mbumba consists of a very large and heavy salu bag with or without sculpture. In Mayombe some of these are made from the tooth of a hippopotamus and others from elephant-tusks, the latter are finely sculptured and have human forms.

The salu bag is carried in a mpidi-basket in which are found, besides all sorts of ordinary medicines, stones of different shapes, representing all kinds of internal tumours. They have all been named after nkisi Mbumba himself. Also to be found are the tusks of wild pigs, sharp excrescences on nuts, thread and grass as well as other objects representing shooting, stinging pains and aches. In addition to these there are claws of birds of prey, crabs etc. symbolizing the powerful grip Mbumba has on his victims. There is also a needle for the shrouding of corpses.

When the composition begins ngudi a nganga calls out: "Miswa". Answer: "Kaaka". "Bidi (a drop of palm wine in the mug left for the next man) bya bankimba (laymen), bidi bya banganga". Again: "Miswa". "Kaaka". "Malavu (palm wine) ma bankimba, malavu ma banganga". Again: "Miswa". "Kaaka". "Nsusu (fowl for) ya bankimba, nsusu ya banganga".

Then the novices exclaim: "Miswa". "Kaaka". "Bonga watwala" (go and bring hither the palm wine), to drink, which takes place at night. In the morning a lusaba-shed is built with a large stone in the middle upon which medicine is prepared to the accompaniment of singing. It is placed in the salu bag, a fowl is sacrificed, cooked and eaten. They then go to the water to take lunsoko-nsoko and a kanza-snake as kinkonko-animals.

It may be a male or a female nganga with the names Nsa Madyela and Kala. As soon as they have paid ngudi a nganga they are told the prohibitions orally: not to eat munyaka-fruit, wanzi or musoso tomatoes, not to eat food that is boiled with munsabi-nsabi wood, nor manioc that has been collected during the day.

Mbumba can cure the same diseases that he causes, when he is revenged upon those who have been afflicted by his means of protection or have not observed his prohibitions.

The nganga frequently massages the sick person by laying a door on top of him and, keeping his balance with the help of a stick, slowly tramping on the door, saying: "Mpotu na nkumbu andi kalembo, nkumbu Kimbimbu kya musitu". (He does not know the name of the blockhead, the name is Kimbimbu of the forest.)

If the patient does not get well he gets a medicine to drink which contains, inter alia, mutumbi, mulolo, mumpaka and tomatoes. This must first be boiled. From the salu bag the nganga takes yellow ochre which he smears upon the sufferer's arm-joints, legs, belly and back. He then takes nsindu-stones and medicine and places these upon the sick man's heart, saying: "Dekele-dekele (sound of a rattle). Mbumba who are for women, Mbumba



who are for men, let him not get a tense stomach or aches. Make him as soft as the mpasi-cricket or the nzenze-cricket. Neho, nahozi (calm, quiet)".

Mbumba is used to prevent the theft of fruit, whether harvested or growing, or to prevent house-breaking and theft in general. The nganga takes medicine from the salu bag and wraps it in leaves or pieces of raffia-cloth, selling them to the public in the market-place or elsewhere. The means of protection are placed on good nsafu-trees, on fruitful palms, the doors of dwellings, provision-sheds and the like. Frequently it is only a large stone with medicine that is hung up to warn a thief; for if he nevertheless enters he will get a severe rupture or other malady.

Such means of protection are further attached to the chief's staff for solemn occasions, or other signs of dignity, to the advocate's emblem of office and to the instruments that are used, *inter alia*, on the occasion of the nkasa-test and other ordeals, so that they may not have a spell put upon them when the nganga is performing his official functions. Anyone interfering with such a protective agent will be immediately attacked by Mbumba.

In war, too, Mbumba may be used as Nkiduku (another nkisi) by way of protection for the fighters or as a help in taking prisoners of war. If Mbumba is used to bring about pregnancy, the woman is treated with medicine and with a little model of the carrying band in which infants are carried on the hip. The band is protected by protective medicine.

Mbumba can also help his nganga when the latter is in straits. If he conjures and invokes Mbumba with a rattle, Mbumba will give him game in connection with the hunt and with trapping and will paralyse those having evil designs against him etc.

There are several types of Mbumba. The most important is Mbumba Cindongo (*kya baala*), found in the Mayombe tracts. It is placed in a kinkunga-basket. The sculpture is made either of the tooth of a hippopotamus or of an elephant's tusk, and resembles a human being.

When the composition is completed a goat is sacrificed. The animal's throat is cut and all those present must lick the blood. If, however, goat's meat is forbidden to anyone, he must smear the blood on his neck.

When a sick person is to be treated they draw a chalk ring on the ground, dig a little pit in the middle and place therein a *sevi-mussel*, *nkungulu-fruit*, palm seeds and *kyala mooko-fruit*s. After this the nganga takes the *sevi-mussel* and draws it upwards on the body, making the sick person lick it and spit into the pit. The other fruits are used in the same way.

The nganga now puts the sculpture in the pit, takes a little of the dirt from the same and smears it on the sufferer's body, after which he begins to massage the patient's legs and arms with four stones and *ngongo-beans*. The nganga now takes a little *semo* and *tondo fungus*, chews it up and spits it on the patient's arms, chest and whole body. The patient then says: "Cut for me the magic *nsunga-ring* (cf. LDKF, p. 778), that I may put it on and be protected".

In case of pains in the chest the nganga boils *bunzi-fruit* and bones of the *mfudi-fish* and this medicine is given the patient to drink.

For smelling out a little tusk is used in the opening of which is placed medicine to facilitate the ecstatic spasms in case of a positive result.

Mbola (rottenness), Bovi, Kimbovi, Wanyaka, Venga all belong to the same nkisi family.

It is much feared on account of the large malignant sores with which it afflicts its victims. It derives from a very old person who died and was buried. He lived and became very ancient in the world of the dead and died once again. But then he had himself transformed into a nkisi. When the latter came forth on the water it spun round and was discovered by a passer-by. He took a leaf and made three bipanzingila-holes in it (over the hand). He then picked up the nkisi and took it home with him.

During the night the nkisi revealed its name and said: "I am a human being who formerly lived on the earth. I have died twice. Take me then and keep me, that I may become your nkisi, for I shall have the name Mbola, as I have decayed twice. You must weave me a mpidi-basket or make a bark-jar (lukobe) in which I shall dwell. You must also have a sculpture carved. This must have a hoe and an axe as arms as well as other things."

On waking up, the man did as he had been told in the dream. He was instructed in the treatment of the sick, in singing and in composing the whole nkisi. He then tried to find out whether Mbola had the power to heal and treated one whose gums were rotting and whose teeth were falling out. The latter was given lembe-lembe medicine and kinsangula etc., and at once became better. The discoverer was now made ngudi a nganga and taught others to compose Mbola.

Mbola consists of a large lukobe-jar in which are a kunda-bell, "heart" and medicine in a salu bag. Mbola is kept in a mpidi-basket in which are also kunda-bells and legs of nsekoso-grasshoppers. The lid of the mpidi-basket has a medical "heart" and the whole is covered with skin from the mbaku-animal. The mpidi-basket is carried on the back with a band over the forehead. It is hung on the wall of a house or on a pile of wood near a house wall.

In connection with the composition there are many ceremonies and songs, of which the following may be noted. A lusanga-shed with a stone for the preparation of medicine is erected. Everyone entering the shed is consecrated by having chalk marks made on his ears. The cutting of the medicine takes place under a large cloth of some sort. The novices put leaves or tufts of cotton-wool on their bodies to symbolize the sores that Mbola may cause. No-one may laugh at them when so got up. Under the cloth each one gets two fowls. The consecration of the place and the cutting occurs through the song: "The girl that I met at the nkandu-drum (or the bed of palm ribs), she slept". Then the cutting begins and they strike their knives on the stone, which is surrounded with gunpowder that is afterwards set off with a fire-brand from the mwindu-tree.

When the novices emerge from the cloth they go to the fork in the road and sing: "Go and tear down the ravines (tulumuna mabanga), yaaya Mbol'e-e. Thither have you been sent, go yaaya Mbol'e-e".

In the salu bag there are, besides ordinary medicine, skin and claws of a leopard, crocodile hide and teeth, skin of the nsesi and mbaku animals, heads of snakes, stones swallowed by the crocodile, mpekwe-bat, lwengi and mabooka fishes, nkusu and sisi parrots. All this may also be placed in a fish-basket (dudubudi).

They then make a fly-whisk as a sign for those who render nkisi impure, for they will

then get sores on their bodies wherever flies alight. With the whisk they are to brush them off. For this reason those who are born through nkisi Mbola or who are treated with him, and those belonging to the same kanda as the novices may not eat leopard, nsesi-antelope, goat, lwengi and mabooka fish, bimbambi-beans or nkusu and sisi parrots. Not even great grandchildren or even later generations may eat the things mentioned. From the goat they will get mavezi-eczema, from nkusu and sisi sinza-sores and sores in the nose, from nsesi ringworm and the like and from mabooka red rashes.

Together with the fly-whisk they make a hoe in order to koma nloko (place themselves under the protection of the nkisi). The payment for this is pigs, fowl, food and palm wine.

In connection with the composition of Mbola they also go to a burial place where a powerful and frank person has been buried. They stir up earth from the grave and smear this on the sculpture. When they get home they sacrifice a cock, whose blood is then poured over Mbola to the accompaniment of the song: "Where the fowl has died, a human being had died".

The wattled lusoba-shed is placed at the foot of a palm, which is thereafter sacred. Only Mbola's banganga may drink of wine from this palm.

Mbola can cause horrible rotting sores and make the roots of a person's teeth decay and so on. For toothache a nganga scrapes off bark from the luveeta-tree and puts nzo-pepper and salt on the teeth. He also takes sawdust collected from the drilling of a post in the house together with medicine from Mbola's salu bag for the sick teeth to eat.

The person undergoing treatment may not eat, amongst other things, manioc that has been damaged by the hoe, nor may he eat anything from a desecrated field. The nganga must first bestrew the field, and the other natives may then eat of the harvest. No-one may use a firebrand for purposes of illumination in the house after nightfall.

The nganga may not sleep naked, for in this case Mbola would burn his loin-cloth in the fire.

Mbola may be invoked for various purposes, e.g. to discover bandoki, thieves and other criminals or to hinder them in their activities, and for the settlement of disputes.

If sores occur on all a person's limbs, in his mouth, nose or head and Mutadi's nganga has smelled out that this is Mbola's revenge, then Mbola's nganga is summoned to put Mbola's pot on the fire. Men and women surround it, beating on drums, dancing and singing. The Mbola rhythm is bu-kwimvi, bu-kwimvi, bu-kwimvi, and the song: "E-e, bring forth wood, Mbola has seen". This is repeated without cessation.

The nganga notes on which side the pot boils over, for this indicates the direction in which the culprit is to be found. The sufferer is then besprinkled, while they repeat: "Let us sprinkle, e-e".

Mbola is also employed to bless pregnant women and to protect them with the help of nsilu-amulets. When the child is born and is to be carried out of the house Mbola's nganga officiates. The mother's nsilu is put on the child, which is also given a coloured calabash from which none other may drink. If anyone should do so, the child cries and may fall ill. The nganga must then bless it again.

## CHAPTER XI

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### Bunzi and other Minkisi

Bunzi is a very well-known and respected nkisi of which several variants occur. In Mayombe and near the coast it has the character of a water-nkisi and in many places represents the West wind and storm; it is then called Mpulu-Bunzi or Mpulu-Buzi.

Bunzi is regarded as a tribal nkisi going back to the beginning. As the creator of the first-born it is called Bunzi Mpungu, "the great Bunzi", and has herewith risen to the same dignity as Nzambi Mpungu.

In the hilly wooded country of the interior (e.g. around Kingoyi) it is derived from the lubamba-rattan, which bears much fruit. It is here named Bunzi dya nsemuka (Bunzi through whom the first child was born). If a nganga is to compose Bunzi he must first have begotten a child. Bunzi is also called Lumoni (to let folk see his deeds with their eyes), or Vyenda, referring to the first child-bearing of the sister (the one married off).

This Bunzi is accounted one of the baminkisi. Bunzi's body consists of a large bundle of raffia which is as a rule covered with skin of the kinbanda sloth-monkey and the mfuki-animal and others. On the inside hangs a kunda-bell. Its function is to see the people, and Bunzi is therefore set up on a peg at the door and covered with dried palm-leaves.

When Bunzi is to be composed ngudi a nganga begins by exclaiming: "Bu", and the others reply in unison: "Eh, Bunzi". And again: "Bu" — "Eh, Bunzi". "Bu" — "Eh, Bunzi, of the mbamba-rattan that gives birth, that breeds. Eh, what? Increase the children at the wife's clitoris!"

Then the novices must demonstrate their skill and craft in seeking out what is hidden. A gun, a knife or some other object is buried for them to find. If they are successful, the others sing: "Eh, mother e-e. Eh, mother e-e. Bunzi of the mbamba-rattan. Eh, mother away at the nzobo-animal, mother. Who has found it?" Reply: "Yua Mbedi Nkumba".

In the morning they continue to nse-kenda, where the novices conclude the composition of nkisi. Here ngudi a nganga is to show them medical leaves and other medicine for the treatment of the sick.

Chalk and ndimba-red are smeared on the nganga to consecrate him when he is to treat the sick person.

Medicine is put in and is always made ready, to the accompaniment of the particular phrases which characterize the function of each ingredient.

When darkness falls at nse-kenda the novices go to meet their deceased fathers, mothers, brothers and sisters, whom they invoke. Then they weep, to show that they are sorry to be obliged to part from them. The relatives of the novices burn the mazanza-medicine bag and say: "Listen! Female child, male child, go and change your place at that of the elders in between (nsinsi) night and day (midnight). Sir Nzyele watwa waluta, rob and strike, dig up the matutu-grass stalk through the storm through the whirl-wind in the village to which Nkondi has gone. May the pigs snort, the dogs bark!" The nganga novices are now considered to have visited the dead in their country and to have died themselves.

The novices are then carried to the lusaba enclosure, and they cry to nkisi Funza in the following song: "Funza, arouse the children for me, arouse the children for me!" Now they stand up and each takes his wife to vie with each other (kangama maalu) as to who is to set up makunzi-trees, to put pots on the fire to boil bananas that the child must give the father to eat in order to show Bunzi that the nganga has begotten. When they are fixing the makuku cooking stones they sing: "Fix firmly (koma) children, then we shall firmly fix foetuses iyi - iyi - iyi - i".

When the bananas have been boiled together with a pig's head they have also named the children the novices are to beget. After this the members of the novices' makanda begin to dance.

At the composition and consecration of Bunzi ngudi a nganga is first to receive payment according to the traditional rate, so that Bunzi may not become angry and lose his force when the nganga is about to treat a sick person.

The nganga may not eat byala-fruits if they have been set apart as protective agents by Bunzi, nor may he eat the head of a pig, or the entrails and kidneys of pigs, poultry, nzobo, mfuki, nsinzi, musimba, all kinds of birds, nkaka, nkoko, mfufu or the heads of "animals of the plains", i.e. animals with hooves. One may call Bunzi's nganga Wayenda (he went). His wife boils bananas, which the nganga eats.

Bunzi's nganga may render his consecration void if he eats forbidden food, steals, is unchaste or fights. But if he sends for a fellow-nganga and gives him three or four hens then he is purified again by Bunzi.

Bunzi cures swollen stomach, swollen limbs, swollen eyes, chest trouble (cough), is a protection against thieves and others, renders null and void all sorts of bikandu prohibitions and takes revenge on those who bind or wrong Bunzi's nganga.

A sick person is treated in secret. He is made to lie down on his back on the ground with his arms on his belly and his arms are suddenly stretched. First, however, the nganga gives him lembe-lembe medicine and medicine from the salu bag to drink. When he has drunk the nganga must trample him with his feet, which have been consecrated with spittle mixed with medicine. The nganga then smears clay on one of the soles of his feet and with this he massages the sick man, beginning with the forehead and saying the while: "I am your mpati, I am your nganga, do not let him get swollen legs, do not let him get swollen arms, let him not get swollen eyes, let him not get a swollen belly, not noisy colic (rupture),

do not make him distended, not as stones in the stomach, not with a nose like a cucumber and so forth. Treat him inwardly. I treat him here outwardly."

He then massages the patient with his other foot on the other side of the body, and this is repeated in all three times on each side. At each massaging the nganga gives a stamp with his foot, sending the complaint where the sun goes, to the place where the pains go. The nganga then massages the arms three times on each side, claps his hands and banishes the complaint to the place where the sun goes, whither the pains go.

Bunzi also affords magical protection, like other minkisi, against thieves and other evil-doers if a bikandu prohibition from Bunzi is set up on what it is desired to protect.

Bunzi, who is stronger than the majority of minkisi, can also render void the force and effects of other minkisi's kandu prohibitions if one takes lemba-lamba mixture and cuts up other medicine from Bunzi, putting it where the kandu prohibition is to be removed. Now bonzo-medicine is sprinkled, to the accompaniment of the following words: "Now I have taken away the kandu prohibition". The natives may then eat, one after the other, of what has been forbidden, which is now no longer forbidden.

If anyone has bound or maltreated Bunzi's nganga, the latter snaps his fingers magically and in secret over e.g. a banana, a palm or some other object in the village of the malefactor, and it forthwith becomes forbidden. If the villagers take or eat of it they will be attacked by Bunzi. Bunzi's nganga can also snap his toes or make some similar gesture in order silently to invoke Bunzi. The nganga may not, however, snap his fingers or toes out of spite, for in this case he will die at the hands of Nkondi, by whom he has sworn at the nse-kenda place. Nor, if he gets angry with someone and begins to fight, may he snap his fingers, for in this case Bunzi's nganga would die, since he has sworn by Nkondi.

But if the nganga is quarrelling with much younger persons about nsafu-trees or palms he may snap his fingers to the end that they may not possess and eat of the trees, and they then leave them to him.

"Bunzi with pig's teeth" is so called for the reason that the pig, too, is named bunzi. This Bunzi has come from the pig's snout; its body is kept in a mpidi-basket. In the salu bag there are, inter alia, shells, pig's snout, the forehead of a buffalo, rat's and porcupine's teeth, various stones from the water, the roots of trees and "ordinary" medicines.

This Bunzi is hung above the shelf in the dwelling.

The procedure for the composition is the same as in the case of other minkisi. The first song is: "Eh Bunzi, stand up, let us go. Eh, Bunzi, stand up, let us go". They dance and beat the drum. The second song: "Leaning against the door, mother. Leaning against the door, mother".

They then tear up leaves and other medicine and put the pieces in the salu bag. The novices are to prepare food and fetch palm wine to go and eat by the water, where they must also catch a water-beetle and learn the prohibition rules.

Before they may hear these each of the novices must receive his nkisi, and they say: "They have given me nine pigs, nine sheep, nine hens, nine goats, nine ducks and nine

beans". Each of the novices must then, with his nkisi, clap his hands to thank and honour the latter.

The prohibitions are as follows: You may not eat of a pig that has died a natural death, nor of the nkanka-squirrel, the mfufu-mouse, nor beans and the munyaka-plant etc. You may not be near a pig-sty where a sow is littering. If you infringe the prohibitions, nkisi will become unclean and must be consecrated anew.

If a fellow-nganga has died, the nails and hair must be cut off the corpse and thrown in the water. A living nganga leans his brow against that of the corpse, whereupon those present go into raptures and say to the corpse: "Your own nkisi has followed you, but leave ours e - e - e".

For the treatment of the sick the medicine in the nkisi bag is used. They sing: "Leaning against the door, mother". The nganga draws mamoni-lines at the corners of his own eyes, and on the sick person he smears chalk and yellow ochre on legs, arms and belly.

The sick man is not permitted to eat of a pig that has died a natural death, nor may he eat of the flesh of this animal if it has buckshot in it. Further, the sufferer may not break any object with his knee, nor may he break off fresh manioc with his hands, it must be cut with a knife.

If a nganga has lain in a "bad house", i.e. practised coitus, he must not touch nkisi. If he should do so and then treat a sick person, the latter will become worse. The medicine no longer has any power.

A nganga may be male or female and is called Nse Londa, Lukwala or Yengo.

"Bunzi in a mpidi-basket" belongs to the water family and is often used as Nkondi. In it are to be found all sorts of round, crooked and twisted bits of wood that have been salvaged from water. It is thus thought that there is a great python in this Bunzi, and when Bunzi's nganga smells out the mpidi-basket is changed into a burden that no-one can lift, which is the indication of the one who is suspected of being a ndoki. If he can lift it, he is free.

This Bunzi also gives joy, for of one who has been vouchsafed much joy they say that Bunzi has thrown it to him.

Bunzi (Nkenge vanga) is put in a shell and used to cure those to whom Bunzi has given a belly that only swells and swells. The nganga finds some nsaka-nsaka root (potato tuber) and cuts it up in a pot with roots of ntumbiki and nsonguti. The whole is boiled. When the medicine has cooled the sick man is made to drink it. The nganga then tramples on his belly so that it collapses. When the patient has drunk the medicine his stomach must be evacuated the whole night. If it contains thread worms these also come out, so that the belly collapses properly.

Makwangu Bunzi is kept in a bark jar for which a little house has been built. In this jar there is medicine and a lot of chalk.

This nkisi is most resorted to where someone has had constant bad luck in his hunting or fishing. One who, for instance, can no longer manage to shoot an animal immediately collects wood to make a fire in the courtyard. The drummer then beats the drum and those present sing, dance and ring small bells, while nkisi is standing among them. They cut up



Fig. 16. Contents of Nkisi Mwana Bunzi, Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 1349).



lusaku-saku and tondo and put it in their mouths to spit out and bless nkisi. They sing: "Eh, Bunzi, act quickly, let us go, e-e. The wadding raffia fibre, spread out, let us go, e-e". They now hide nkisi in his house.

In the morning they go hunting. They are able to shoot two or three animals. They take a leg of each animal and put it in Bunzi's house so that he will have food, and above all have pity on them and give them good luck. Bunzi's house is therefore always full of all sorts of legs.

Mwe Mbuku (Mister Mbuku), belonging to the water family, is often referred to as Bunzi, as they have the same prescriptions. The nganga may not strike his fist on the ground.

Mister Mbuku derives from Funza. The latter said to a person in a dream: "You must go to the water and find a nkisi that is spinning round, the name of it is Mwe Mbuku. You are very sick and you are dying, because belly, eyes and legs are swelling up. When you are standing on the shore you must first clap your hands and thank (honour) before picking it up".

Mister Mbuku consists of a sculpture and salu bag with medicine of the ordinary kind. The sculpture is tall, is called Mamvwala and is full of white and red spots. It has a place in a special little house.

The salu bag is kept in the roof of the dwelling-house. It may also be hung up.

Mwe Mbuku is composed during the consumption of much food and drink to the accompaniment of singing and dancing to glorify nkisi. Ngudi a nganga gives a speech and sings for what they are eating and drinking during the composition. To the novices they say at first: "Bisime!" — "Kaaka!" — "Bisime!" — "Kaaka!" "Earth and sky have met each other, sun and moon have met each other." It may be composed by both men and women.

Mwe Mbuku acquires goods by treating the sick. If by new moon no patient has come to consult him the nganga takes the kunda rattle at the next new moon and conjures his nkisi to afflict people with illness, so that he may get goods. He says: "Dekele, dekele!" (sound of the rattle). "Ah, Mister Mbuku, I am going to the country, the country and the country. I am going to the water, the water and the water. Ah, you who sit in the village, what shall you get? Make them full of swellings, let their limbs swell and their bellies likewise!" If he then gets someone to treat he says: "The late Mr. NDAMBA MWADI (a nganga) gave me bumpati, thus bunganga, he died, certainly, but through the head he sent me a dream. Make him fat as the cricket, as the mpasi-grasshopper and so forth. Make him not full of thorns whereby the nose is destroyed, whereby the ears are destroyed. He smells you. But you, do not smell him. Let us cure him with health! Let us cure him with peace!" He may also continue in this way: "Ah, yaaya, do not let his joints swell, do not let his legs swell, nor yet his belly!" Whereupon he draws mamoni-lines on the sick person and gives him mabonzo-medicine, which consists of water and salt and all sorts of leaves.

The patient may not eat beans and bananas. This was mentioned by the deceased nganga NDAMBA MWADI.

If there is a dudu-calabash (i.e. a kitutu nkaadu-calabash) in a village and this should



Fig. 17. A nkisi, the lower Congo (Laman 486).

happen to crack, many people will die. Then it is often called Bunzi, for it has the same function (ntwadulu). Then Mwe Mbuku's nganga may not eat on his couch. If he does so his eyes, belly and legs will swell up.

The nkisi and appurtenant sculpture are invoked, but this is done in its house. A short little knife is taken and thrust into the sculpture through Mamvwala's Nkondi. It then attacks either in the chest (dyspnea etc.) or in the belly, eyes and legs (which swell up).

Funza is a now almost forgotten nkisi. A creator's power was formerly ascribed to it and it was considered almost the peer of Nzambi Mpungu. Funza created all that is crooked and distorted among plants, animals and men, i.e. everything malformed.

As nkisi it consists of two bags, a male bag with a red colour (ndimba) and a female bag with chalk. Funza is a water nkisi.

In the chalk bag are all sorts of medicines and things which are used where a water nkisi is employed. There are also raffia bast and plaits (makinda — which strengthens) that are fastened round the arms or on the carrying band to give fertility or strong foetuses.

There are further two peanuts grown together, bananas and geometric moths. For if a woman is quite alone and has to break firewood for herself she goes to Funza's nganga to be treated with these moths; and the same applies if she must fetch water, pluck pepper or tear manioc leaves. She wants, in other words, to have offspring. There is, too, one of the old people's tobacco pipes, which are called "the old people's dream", i.e. the dream of getting a child. For one who dreams he is smoking such a pipe will get heirs.

Curiously formed stones and so on occur also, for Funza has created them.

In the red bag are to be found the same objects as in the chalk bag.

Among the prohibitions may be noted the following. One who has lain in a "bad house" (had coitus) may not touch Funza nor treat anyone with him. One may not step over the runner of a pumpkin, fetch water with a calabash (a mug must be used), eat tomatoes with others or eat the head of the ntondya-fish. One who sees a hen flying must break off his conversation with others.

Funza dya Monzi originated because twins were born in the kanda. It is kept in a mpidi-basket in which are two small stones, two creepers from a cleared plot, two knife-blades, two rattles, chalk and yellow ochre etc. It is kept on a shelf in the house.

When this nkisi is composed everybody must put it on (simba), so that they may not have twins (bansimba). They sing: "My twins, etc.", dancing the while.

Funza thus makes people give birth to twins and prevents the birth of twins; he likewise malforms foetuses, so that they get shrunken or large heads.

The medicine is doubled, i.e. two bananas growing together, two peanuts or anything at all presenting the phenomenon of symphysis, as well as so-called "ordinary medicine".

In the treatment two knife-blades are taken and the nganga strikes the ear: "Listen, ears and ears, eyes and eyes, arms and arms, legs and legs, things and things, may they be both here and there. And fingers and fingers, clitoris and clitoris, may they be perfect, Mister Funza".

When the nganga has treated one who has given birth to twins he sings and dances: "My first-born twins, my last-born twins!" They are copiously bathed with tukula-red.

They may not eat anything growing together, or anything whose top is cloven (corn-cobs etc.), nor may they take fire in a house in which Funza is kept. If one of the children dies, an image is made which the survivor must wear, and they say: "The other one has gone to fetch salt in Boma". Funza may have both male and female banganga.

Lemba is a very popular nkisi, coming from the Kamba in the Kwilu-Nyari Valley. Lemba is a nkisi of the ancestors, a mediator between the deceased and the living. This function, however, is beginning to disappear. Nowadays Lemba's banganga are extortioners. They extort money even through lawsuits, but especially by getting new novices who must pay large sums which they are not allowed to divulge. By inveigling a person to drink Lemba's mpolo-medicine the banganga force him to compose Lemba.

Lemba is composed only within the father's kanda, from father to sons. "It is your father who must teach you to compose Lemba".

One day during the composition they go to the graves, beat the drum and sing, *inter alia*: "Go before to the grave with matondo (thanksgiving gifts), go before to the grave". Or: "Let us go, let us go to see your deceased father".

Lemba consists of a lukobe which in size and appearance resembles a powder keg. The bark is from the mpenzi-tree. A pig's tooth has been attached to the lid with gum. From the string by which the jar is carried hangs a little mukonzi-drum and a new nsaba-pot is tied up in a piece of raffia cloth with a cord of banana-bast mixed with mpusu-fibre. The cord is wound three times round the pot.

The jar must be placed on the couch or on three nsenga-trees.

The complaints for the treatment of which the composition of Lemba is intended are dyspnea, stitch and chest pains. It is Lemba who has entered into the body of the sufferer. The sick person must send a son with hens and palm wine to Lemba's nganga so that the latter may take with him mpolo-medicine from the nsaba-pot. When the patient has drunk the medicine and got better he is called Son Malemba and the nganga is called Father Malemba.

Son Malemba must now compose Lemba because he has drunk mpolo-medicine and recovered. Lemba will thenceforth rule over his possessions and bring him happiness and wealth. Son Malemba must now prepare to procure many pigs, many hens, fish and other food and palm wine, for Father Malemba will be coming to Son Malemba to teach him to compose Lemba.

Father Malemba summons other banganga and chooses representatives (*makambu*) from among them to teach Son Malemba, on his behalf, the process of composition. When they arrive, the father has ngoma and nkonzi drums beaten by the village roadside, the representatives must tell Son Malemba to procure palm wine to lead the father and his female helpers (*mimbanda*) into the enclosure where nkisi is to be composed. The enclosure is put up to the accompaniment of singing, the beating of drums and dancing throughout the night, until dawn breaks.

Afterwards the banganga purify Son Malemba by attiring him in nsokya-grass (chaff and the like) if the possessions have come to an end at their hands. But when he has had

the nkwangi-ring put on his arm he is already a nganga for Lemba, and if any person outside of his kanda throws any desecrating object at him the nganga is rendered unclean and the evil-doer must pay a fine. In this way Lemba procures possessions for his nganga and the latter must thus complete his nkisi.

When Son Malemba has been purified he is told to pay in the form of pigs for the mimbanda women and five pigs for the nganga. He must then hand over three big pigs for the beating of the ngunga-drum and Father Malemba. The son hands over the pigs and slaughters several, afterwards scattering the blood in the form of a ring under the roof of the enclosure. But three pigs for the conversation are to be kept alive until all the banganga have gone, whereupon they are slaughtered.

Father Malemba pours out the blood of the pigs round about the enclosure and at the door, and teaches Son Malemba how he must come to him to help him procure goods if anyone outside of his kanda throws anything disrespectful at him. Then they drink palm wine with the father's mimbanda women and the son's and beat the nkonzi-drum and sing. Rings are then taken and blessed, and put on Son Malemba's mimbanda women, one on each arm.

One day some forgetful person throws a kimpela-object at Son Malemba. The latter then sends a messenger to Father Malemba, who comes and shows how the son is to request goods for the kimpela-object of Lemba.

When the father arrives he beats the nkonzi-drum and sings: "Ko-ko-ko!" — "Ko!" — "You have won Lemba. You have won". After demanding palm wine the father must ask for a pig for Lemba's nkoko-drum, and pigs for Lemba's bingonini and a pig for the mimbanda women from the person who has thrown the kimpela-object at the son. The culprit must then pay one person or ten pigs for the actual offence and a concealed pig for Father Malemba.

Son Malemba must now purchase a pig that costs five ntete-baskets of his raffia-cloth to redeem (yambindukila). He then sends for Father Malemba and other banganga to come and conclude Lemba and burn gunpowder round the lukobe-jar and close the shed with the final inauguration ceremonies connected with Lemba's composition.

Son Malemba takes three pigs and gives them to those who have spent the night and sung, inter alia: "You who have composed Lemba, you were neither like the ngembo-bat in sleep, muna bubu Malemba. A - a, you are like the night-jar!" The big pig is slaughtered and bunches of bananas are cut down and boiled by the sons born in the kanda which is engaged in composing Lemba. When the sons have done this the banganga have gone a long way away. They then say to Son Malemba: "When we return to the village you shall sleep with your Father Malemba's mumbanda woman, and he shall sleep with your own wife. You will thus become brave to request goods of those who throw kimpela and splash Lemba's messenger.

Leaves of the mumbwangu-mbwangu, mundanda-nzila, ndimba, minkwisa mya nseka plants are then plucked, as well as bark of the mwindu and nlolo trees. These medicines

are then wrapped up in a lubongo cloth. When they pass the burial place on their way back they take a wise nkuyu-spirit and put it in the lukobe-jar.

At the enclosure fencing of palm branches and mandala mbwangi is set up. Then of each kind of leaf they have taken from nse-kenda they let one hang down and cover over the enclosure with much cloth, and conduct thither Father Malemba and Son Malemba's mimbanda.

They pound up on stones the leaves they have taken with them. When this has been done Father Malemba and Son Malemba go in immediately. Other banganga beat the nkonzi-drum outside with singing and dancing. The two are to choose beautiful women, one by one, and sleep with them. When they have done so they must draw lines on them, so that other banganga may know which women Father and Son Malemba have had intercourse with.

They now take food that the son has had prepared and go behind the enclosure to compose and distribute Lemba's mpolo-medicine. The banganga must share out the food that has been cooked to all the sons who have come from the kanda.

At the grave they mix clay with water and palm wine to put into the nsaba-pot and boil mpolo-medicine, which can be sent to anyone who is attacked by Lemba. The pot is placed behind the house. Into it are put also tukula-red and kolwa kya makaya (corolla) that mimbanda have pounded up and mfwumbu-medicine, as well as nails from fingers and toes, eye-brows, old strips of cloth from the home and from each of the participants.

After this Son Malemba's mimbanda must tie mizita-knots round the bark jar. These are to be a sign for their husbands, for if any mumbanda woman is unclean the knot is crooked.

Then the lembe-jar is ready and it is placed on the shelf in the interior of the house, while the nkonzi-drums are placed at the door of the house.

When Lemba has attacked a person, only that which has been put into the pot and is called Lemba's mpolo-medicine can be used as a cure. The nganga therefore opens up the nsaba-pot and takes a little of the medicine to give the patient to drink, saying: "That which has come from the sun, the sun takes away. That which has come from the moon, the moon takes away. Father Malemba has given me birth, has looked after me, I have grown up flourishingly. E, Lemba, let the sick person get well". The nganga must take nkula-red and ndimba-red to smear the corners of his eyes and draw mamoni-lines on his arms, so that his dignity may become visible and he shall be still more respected.

Lemba loses his keen scent if the knots round the jar get twisted and it thus becomes apparent that Lemba has been rendered unclean by someone. The nganga must in this case see to it that Lemba is rehabilitated.

Lemba's nganga may not see a naked woman, may not commit adultery, not receive other fines than those deriving from someone who has thrown kimpela. Father Malemba may not eat the heart of a pig, nor may he eat manioc stew, nor that which is byomba-unclean. No-one may ask for Lemba's goods who is not Lemba's nganga.

If the nganga has contravened any of these prohibitions he must summon other banganga,

who then come and close the house and sacrifice a pig as a sign of repentance before Lemba. The nganga now becomes pure and famous again, no longer fearing Lemba (i.e. it is not feared that he will be killed).

Lemba's nganga does not employ his magic skill to go and treat a person, he gets goods by imposing fines on those who let something fall on him, it may be a drop, a peanut shell, a bit of manioc or earth.

For this reason Lemba's nganga is much feared when walking about in villages without Lemba. He must carry a staff, wear a nkwangi-ring on his arm, and have with him a nkutu-bag and a calabash for the tapping of palm wine. A younger nganga accompanies him, in case he should get drunk or become unclean, for then it is his business to see that there is a lawsuit and a fine imposed.

Father Malemba is greater than Son Malemba. He is therefore more venerated and imposes bigger fines as ngudi a nganga.

Lemba cannot forget one who has been his nganga. Thus he will not attack such a person, for the goods Lemba has left behind in the kanda must not disappear.

Lemba occurs in several variants which are rather dissimilar. Thus the Lemba of Mamundi down towards Mayombe is kept in bark from the tola-tree with two futu-bags of animal hide. The one is male with the name Nsasa Lemba, and the other female, with the name Mpemba Lemba. The former contains medicine and chalk tied up in a bag of mbala-skin. The other one is of nkumbi-skin and is Lemba's spouse. In this one finds tukula-red etc.

In the bark in which the futu-bags are placed there is also medicine, which is referred to as dingongo, Makayi kwa Lemba. In this there are a nsesi-skin and hair which has been shaved from the ngudi a nganga and the novice who have composed Lemba.

The futu-bags are called minkunda. This nkisi has also a funda-parcel which is named Lemba's dikunda, in which all kinds of medicines are to be found.

The medicinal leaves employed are mundanda nzila, kimbanzya, plants bearing binsukulu, tiba-banana, a little palm, nlolo, mfitu, nlomba, nsangi runners etc., as well as nsaku-nsaku and mponi, tukula-red, chalk and salt. This is pounded up and placed in the small pots, which are covered and tied with cloth woven from mantumbu fibre. The rings are called nsongo (=copper).

The nganga takes the novice to the woods with him and makes him sit down at the foot of a silk-cotton tree (mfuma) and place there two kuku-termites mounds that have been consecrated and received the names Mpemba Lemba and Nsasa Lemba. This is done so that if the man or his wife are unfruitful they shall nevertheless have plenty of children, like the termites in these mounds. The novice may also sit down, and a nzulu-ant hill is placed on his head. When the ants creep onto him and bite his head he may not shriek or shake them off, for then the fertility will be shaken off, and he will be called a ndoki. Like the number of ants creeping about, so shall also the number of children be. If the first child is a girl, it must be named Mpemba Lemba. If it is a boy, Nsasa Lemba.

Nsona-day is a holiday for these banganga, and no work may be done on them. On the

morning before leaving the house the nganga is first to take chalk and Nsasa Lemba and put his fingers in the bag, and draw with chalk on temples and wrists. The wife must open up Mpemba Lemba and draw with tukula-red on the same parts of the body. If they disobey this prescription the nganga becomes ill and soon dies.

Lemba's nganga generally try to get all wealthy persons to drink of Lemba's medicine, so that they will be obliged to have Lemba composed. If the latter's banganga in a particular tract get to hear that someone is going to compose Lemba they go thither to lend their assistance and get goods. Ngudi a nganga gets ten to fifteen five-franc pieces, others thirty or forty if they have been chosen as ambassadors to ask for goods from all those who are to become novices and compose Lemba. Lemba's spouse, ngudi a nganga's wife, is to receive a pig, three five-franc pieces, two nkwala-mats and two baskets with goods.

No-one may enter her house except the husband or a nganga Lemba. If anyone should tread on her nkwala-mat or has passed under the roof-gable outside or otherwise contravened the law, a slave or, nowadays, about four five-franc pieces must be paid.

Lemba is in other places a nkonko-drum resembling a canoe. Lemba gives dreams about ancestors and procures possessions. The composition of Lemba is a trifling matter. Some keep Lemba through arm-rings (of copper), which are sometimes used as nkonko-drums to be beaten in connection with invocations etc. in case the last-mentioned are not available.

If nkisi Lemba dies, the ring is not taken off. No-one who is not nganga Lemba may touch it out of forgetfulness, for in this case he must immediately pay the nganga a hen.

Those who have composed Lemba trust that he will waft to them possessions from their ancestors.

Some keep Lemba in a box, into which none may look. It is kept in the interior of the house, and no unauthorized person may enter there. If anybody does so and renders Lemba unclean, he must be ransomed, or otherwise sold for possessions to Lemba.



Fig. 18. *Nkisi Mwana Bunzi, Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 1349).*



## Lulendo and other Minkisi

Lulendo (power) was a power nkisi which spread from Mukimbungu to Bwende and beyond. It was used to regulate the markets and ensure safety on the trade routes.

When someone went to fetch a nganga he had to pay two pigs and a nkuku-mat, i.e. a mat of a he-goat's skin on which to sit and rule. The mat was called Lulendo's nkuku and the skin had to be entirely white, without any black or red spots.

In the mat was wrapped a small knife (or sword) with three points as on a fork, lulendo. It must not behold sun or moon, for then it would become red, like the setting sun. It was hung up on the roof-ridge inside the house.

The nkisi was composed on three konzo-days in succession, and no-one was allowed to touch any weapon during this period. When the work was finished the makers, the nganga and his helpers, went to the woods and knocked over a kuku-termite hill, whereupon they saw the dead and obtained knowledge of the prescription that "none might see the soldier or the whites".

They then rubbed to pieces three myemo-mixtures (lemba-lemba, mintomina and malembe ntoko) and sprayed everybody with them from their mouths. By way of payment the nganga received four pigs, two of which he gave to his novice. The supply of chickens, goats etc. was so abundant that it was not mentioned, and palm wine flowed like water. There were, in a word, great festivities.

Wherever the chief went he was followed by a youth who carried the goat-skin.

One nkisi is called Nkusu (parrot), as it can tell when a theft has been committed and who is the culprit. The banganga make their voices like that of the nkusu-parrot when they are going to reveal secret matters.

Nkusu belongs to the so-called forest nkisi, as leaves from the woods enter in its composition, which takes place at the edge of a forest or a grove. Furthermore, the nkusu-parrot lives in the woods.

To Nkusu belongs also a sculpture, into which the parrot is transformed in order to be able to speak what it knows. On the belly of the sculpture, with the help of a little gum, is placed a medical heart with a little hair and nails, and outside the gum a little kumbi-seed which resembles a bird's eye.

Nkusu is kept in a nkutu-bag which may be placed anywhere at all in the house for the safe keeping of the contents.

The function of the nkisi is to find out if any theft has been committed, and in this case the sculpture will tell about it. Most important is the nganga's skill in speaking in such a way that it sounds as if Nkusu were speaking. In an investigation the nganga takes the mumbangu-mbangu plant and a fresh palm-nut with which he smears the sculpture; he then pricks a little hole in a pumpkin seed and puts it in his nose out of sight. Now when the nganga puts a question he answers himself, talking through his nose with a piping sound as if this came from nkusu. With the sculpture in his hand he can then expose the thief and is highly praised by the people. Sick persons are not treated through this nkisi. There is, moreover, another nkisi called Nkusu a mamba, because its nganga may never be dirtied with earth. He must bathe every day. It is forbidden to put one's hand into the nkutu-bag.

Mwanza is a very well-known nkisi from the northern Kongo which is also called Ntadi (Mutadi), for it is used, like the latter, for smelling out (fyela). It is composed to the accompaniment of ndungu-drum and dancing. Several songs are sung during the composition, among which may be noted e.g. "The kintombo-bird has gone to smell out on the other side of the Congo. Carry, carry, I am not standing still. E, yaaya, Kintombo, calm yourself" and so on.

Mwanza has no medicine for treatment and no prohibitions for the patient. The medicine gives ecstasy and trembling in the belly, which is manifested when one is on the right scent when smelling out; if one is going wrong, on the other hand, there is no result. The spasm occurs through scratching in the skin on the left hand and the forehead and smearing with the parts of a goat's entrails which quiver after the slaughter and with green (fresh) palm-nuts. Then small sharp sticks, thorns and points of nsonga-grass are put in peanut paste and swallowed. No-one may poke the nganga in the belly. This nkisi may be used in connection with ordeal, e.g. ordeal by fire and ordeal by mbundu-poison.

Among the southern Kongo, again, Mwanza may be used to recover the nsala-soul of a sick person. When Mwanza's nganga comes he sits, along with a ndungu-drum, beside the sick person on a mat, in order during the night to watch the latter's mayembo-spasms. If the sufferer cannot lapse into ecstasy he must bite kimbanzya-herbs, and if he then becomes ecstatic the nganga will get him well again. Otherwise the nganga gives up trying to restore the soul; the work would be in vain, as the patient must nevertheless die. If now the patient lapses into ecstasy the nganga must get the womenfolk to hunt for a leaf in the morning, and when they have found this the nganga immediately begins to look for the soul. When he has discovered where it is he returns directly to the village and assembles the people to carry it back to the sick man. This is a strenuous business which requires much strength. When they get to the woods they first drink palm wine and then lay a stick or a piece of raffia cloth at the foot of a tree. All of them hold onto it and sing: "Let go this one thing that you have among you. Let go mothers. It is sacred, o-o-o" and so forth. They sing and carry the stick or the piece of cloth in ecstasy, and when they get close to the sick person he rises up in ecstasy to meet them, for with the stick is being borne the nsala-soul. When the stick touches the body of the patient the ecstasy abates and all calm down. They then get a pig and other food to eat and share it with the relatives of the patient

and those who have assembled for the restoration. When the nganga takes his leave he gives the sick man a wad of nkula-red with which he is to wash himself every day. He must carry the stick with him wherever he goes.

Songo (happiness, luck) is a nkisi that procures for its owner good luck in all circumstances. He will get, for example, many possessions, kill much game, get plenty of fish, much palm wine, much profit from trading, beautiful women as wives, will find happiness in the villages on his journeys and will see many who come to seek his help, so that he will become a rich person. When he goes hunting he takes his Songo and his gun with him to the crossroads of the village and blows tobacco smoke over the nkisi and round about himself, and smears nkula-red and chalk on his face. He then puts the nkisi on a wooden plate in the sun. When he has shot an animal the hunter smears the blood on Songo and the gun, cuts out the heart and lays it on Songo. Afterwards, however, he presents it to his father. Otherwise he would become powerless and be unable to shoot any more animals.

If the nganga goes to the market he first blesses his Songo and makes marks on his face, but he may then not give any grown woman salt in her hand, or tobacco.

When he sets his fish traps and osier baskets or is going out hunting he must first bathe with his Songo.

If he is going on a journey he takes the nkisi to the crossroads, where he makes marks on his face. Songo is then hung up under the eaves.

Songo is used also to treat those who want to have good luck. If anyone wishes, for example, to catch lots of mice after a grass fire he must be smeared with tukula-red and charcoal on the forehead and then be treated with the nkisi.

Songo is invoked only when good fortune or luck are sought; for example: "We are going to the plain, the plain, the plain (or land in contradistinction to water). We are going to the water, to the water, to the water. The men or the women, have they put a spell upon us, so that we shall not see that which is above and which is below? Those above are ours. Those below are ours". Then he says to himself, when the animals are within shooting distance: "Songo, songula (do your work)". And when the shot is fired the animal falls down dead.

For the dogs, Dyatu is used. Songo is composed without drum and dance. They do, however, sing a song: "There hovers the mbemba sea eagle. E, yaaya, there hovers mbemba". The nkisi is not used for treating the sick.

The nganga and those who are seeking good fortune may not eat anything that has been taken from the fields or obtained during the day, such as for example manioc or the meat of a recently shot animal. To be able to do so the manioc is allowed to burst beside the fire, and fresh palm-nuts are placed in the meat that is boiling.

If the nganga is unclean he sanctifies himself by taking leaves of the nlolo and mfilu trees and nyanga grass from the roof of a house for menstruation and burns all this on the road to the village; and he then steps over the fire.

In several tracts Songo is regarded as comparable with Nsonde-Ngovo and is accounted as belonging to the Kimbenza family. It is composed in the same way as Nsonde and is



Fig. 19. A, *Nkisi Kula bandoki, Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 590)*. B, *Nkisi Ndobi, Sundi in Kiobo (Laman 1110)*.

used also for the treatment of the sick. It then becomes a nkisi of gladness that cures imbeciles and the insane.

Ngovo is a great nkisi of happiness. It is composed to the accompaniment of drumming, singing, dancing and the drinking of palm wine. One of the songs is as follows: "Let us pound up the mbondi-leaves, the mbondi-cat is an aggressive animal. E, yaaya, let us pound up the mbondi-leaves, the mbondi-cat is an aggressive animal". When the nkisi is finished it is put in a buffalo-horn into which is stuffed a lot of chalk, which is nkisi-powder. Nkisi Ngovo has no prohibitions, for it is not used for treatment. Only when a person has fallen down from a palm-tree can a bonzo-mixture be pounded up to give him.

This nkisi is able to "put forth good fortune" for the people. If anyone wants to have good luck he goes to the nganga to get myemo-mixture or to wash himself with and drink

the nkisi-powder. If he wants to be lucky in his fishing he must wash himself with the powder and drink of it. But if a woman wants to be lucky in the cultivation of plants she must receive the medicine-mixture from the nganga and scatter it on the field, which will then yield a proper harvest.

The leaves for the medicine are from the mbondi-plant, tunama-nama ye tubata-bata, lemba-ntoko and munkwiza. The one who has composed Ngovo and sets out on a journey must first bathe his nkisi with nkula-red and take it with him to the crossroads, and afterwards hang it up at the door at home.

Kiyala and Muhingu and other minkisi belong to the Nsakulu family, whose function is to help people to catch animals in traps and attract clients to the village, and is therefore the occasion of great gladness.

Kiyala consists of a salu bag, kyeke-basket, mwakasa-rattle and nsiba-pipe. It is hung from the roof inside the house. It is composed of medicines and a lot of other things such as e.g. the head of a kintombo-bird, which follows the trail of meat, antelope horn, the tail-tuft of the porcupine, skin of the mbala-civet, hooves of other animals, feathers of the sea eagle etc.

The kyeke-basket "stupefies" the hearts of beasts and men, so that the former can be caught or shot, and the latter will come and seek protection and give themselves up as serfs. To this end the kyeke-basket is waved, the loin-cloth swung forward with the leg and the following words pronounced: "Down they went. Up they went. Play over yonder now!"

When the nganga shoots an animal the nkisi must bathe in the blood with makula-bundles etc. In the meantime the nganga goes to and fro in the courtyard and praises the nkisi by kicking up the loin-cloth with the leg (*venza masamba*) as when dancing or when twins are honoured. Kiyala is then hung up in the sun and left to dry.

When the hunting season begins the nganga blesses both gun and dogs. If the hunters have fired without killing any animal, the hunt is "closed" through envy or in some other magical way. If no animal has been caught the traps must be blessed. When the nganga has cut a tussock of kifuti-grass with natu mbau medicine at a lukaku-trap, burned kifuti and called out milolo, the animals are eager to run headlong into the traps.

If a person who is dogged with much bad luck in the hunt does not get anything, he goes to Kiyala's nganga and is treated. The nganga takes tukula-red and makes marks as a rule on his limbs and at the corners of his eyes, the marks being upright mamoni-lines. He then takes medicine, blesses the hunter's hands that have set the traps, and gives him a drink. If he has the joy of killing animals with Kiyala he must compose it immediately. The same prohibitions apply as for Nakongo.

Mwivi or Songi is a nkisi for good luck in hunting and fishing. Mwivi (actually=thief) wants to get hold of all sorts of things, whether objects, fish or game. Songi gives good luck in the emptying of fish-traps and hunting traps. They belong to the nkisi family Kungu.

Mwivi consists of a futu-bag of cloth; the net is sewn from raffia-fibre. Inside is medicine of the usual kind together with claws (*simba*) of the ngembo-bat, tondo, red palm-nuts,

landu-fruit, kambakani (an object made up of bits and pieces), geometrid moths and tukula-red dye. To these are added three accessories, a woman's tool, a nsafu-hook and a whisk (syese).

This nkisi is kept behind the partition-wall on a level with the rafters.

In connection with its composition much meat is eaten. For this reason they say: "Ah, such a nkisi! His master eats only meat. When he raises his gun, goes out shooting or emptying traps he always finds something". One song is the following: "If you have bananas, just give me some. Eh, eat and hide. If you have peanuts, just give me some. Eh, eat and hide. If you have manioc, just give me some. Eh, eat and hide. If you have beans, just give me some. Eh, eat and hide" and so forth.

The natives dance and clap their hands sharply. They go to the village roads and march briskly in accordance with the nkisi's laws. They may not eat tiba or yimba bananas, pale or yellow palm-nuts, nor may they eat crabs in the water; and the novice may not touch his wife until nkisi is completed.

When the nkisi is composed it is tied up and consecrated. As a means of strengthening it there is a ring of tail-tufts of porcupines and ngondo-apes together with bones on top of the same. A finger-ring is also fastened here.

This nkisi is able to attract the animals that are to be shot or caught, and to "attract" a woman so that she will like the man who wants to possess her. If she is married, she must be attracted so that she will leave her husband and like the friend, as soon as he has given her tobacco or salt.

The hunter must carry a part of the game to ngudi a nganga. If he hides the meat his nkisi does the same.

If a stranger touches the nkisi it becomes unclean and its power comes to an end. It must then be blessed anew and two leaves of male and female mansusu (*Ocimum arborescens*, etc.) are taken together with minanga, the juice being then dropped on the nkisi, that then recovers its power. If an animal is shot a leg or the tail (it is a matter of the ngondo-ape and others) is placed in the nkisi.

Mpu is a very well-known nkisi in our Kindamba-land; it was the first nkisi in our country. This was the nkisi that TA FUMA first had with him. The one who composed it was called MATAKA. Its first constituent part was a salu bag in which were placed chalk, mfidingi-beans and tondo-fungus. Its second part was a nsiba-pipe to which was stuck nkwazi-gum (LAMANA's "medical heart"). These minkisi were kept by a child (probably a pupil to the nganga) by name MONI. As the latter himself composed nkisi Mpu, he received from nkisi the name MAYALA. Afterwards they built a little house in which to keep nkisi. This house was guarded by a woman from MAYALA's kanda. When she married TA FUMA she received from the nkisi the name MANGWA NKAZI. Among all his wives MANGWA was the foremost (the favourite wife), for she kept the nkisi-house for TA MATAKA, who levied a fish tax on the Congo River.

If the fish no longer come in MAYALA must pound up bonzo medicine and put it in the Congo. Some medicine must be buried in the fields where the women work and some be

tied fast in the tops of the palms. As soon as bonzo-medicine has been put into the Congo River and into the earth lots of fish are caught, and peanuts and manioc show a strong growth.

When MATAKA died, he might only be buried at Mbanza kya Mataka. MATAKA's and MAYALA's people and MANGWA NKAZI are not buried there.

Nsakulu is very common and is often called pepper-nkisi, as there is much pepper in the salu bag (including ordinary strong nzo-pepper); there are in addition yellow ochre, nkandikila (a sort of red nuts) and nsaku-nsaku (perfumed roots).

It is used mostly as a protective nkisi and is worn on the chest so that the owner shall not have a spell put upon him by bandoki. It is also used to bind bandoki in their spitefulnesses and to prevent rain.

Nsakulu's composition may vary somewhat, when it is given special names such as e.g. Ndwele, Kindyodyo and Kema. A Nsakulu may occasion headache or aching hips or legs. One so afflicted is then treated with this nkisi, but Nsakulu is otherwise as a rule not used for healing the sick.

Anyone may compose about ten of them, for their ngudi a nganga is not expensive. They are procured when the village is rendered uneasy by bandoki and nightmare.

The medicine is cut up on a little stone within an enclosure, but it must generally be stuffed in nsatuutu-tubes — as in magic guns — which are concealed here and there on the village road or in the houses. They are also loaded with gunpowder and small stones. Such guns are made in large numbers. With the help of cords upon which are threaded mbwela-beads they are fastened to the horns of the mbambi, nkabi, dwangi, nsuma or nkuti antelopes and other beasts. In the nkisi-bag are placed the lumbangu-mbangu herb, mbala-cat-skin and mpwila-ants; gunpowder is burned on a stone. In the animal horn they also stuff small nsadi-stones. They then collect such horn-minkisi, small nkutu-bags of cotton or pineapple and the whole is tied together. To Nsakulu belong also sculptures in some cases.

Sometimes they cut up the heads of all venomous snakes, of which one or another is a kinkonko-snake which lies coiled up on the bed, the trunk or the mat to guard the house. When the snake's master comes home it retires. It may not be killed, for in this case also its master is killed.

If a ndoki has been laid low by a gun he may be treated by Nsakulu if he confesses to having wished to eat a certain person. Nsakulu is often used to protect a person who is to undergo the nkasa-poison ordeal, so that he shall not excrete the nkasa venom. Nsakulu may also be used to protect a person who has been unjustly accused, so that he shall not excrete the poison, for if he did so he would be unjustly condemned and perhaps killed.

Children are often protected with Nsakulu. When men and women are going to a feast and dancing, moreover, they protect themselves with this nkisi. Indeed, all sorts of objects, e.g. a hand-loom, field or village that is being moved elsewhere may be protected against bandoki by means of the magic guns laid out on the route.

Nsakulu is also an eminent rain-maker, who can prevent or give rain. To prevent rain

the nganga walks to the middle of the big courtyard strikes his hand lightly with the futu-bag, blows skyward and declaims the following rigmarole: "Yoyo, yoyo, send it to the Congo shore, where they eat nsafu and bananas. They have already let beans and peanuts ripen. Send it thither, thither".

The nganga then takes a branch of munsangula, puts it on his head and turns a somersault. He goes into the house and puts the nkisi on a shelf, or puts it on the roof so it can sun itself in order that the sky may dry up and the rain not fall. When the nganga has hung up the rain he may not bathe, for then the rain would begin to fall again. The nganga must himself "bask in the sun".

If, on the other hand, the nganga wants to cover the sky and make it rain, he must make a medicine of malemba-lemba and munsabinsabi, after which he takes down his nkisi and goes to bathe. When he comes out of the water the sky clouds over and the rain falls.

Nsakulu is animated if one burns gunpowder for him. If his nganga is hungry he may not himself crack palm-seeds; this must be done by others. If he goes out to pay his debt to nature he may not take his protective amulets with him, but must leave them in the house. On arriving home he must first bathe the lwangu-plant and then take the protective amulets. If the nganga acts wrongly these are desecrated and must be blessed again to regain their power.

On the nape of the neck of Nsakulu's sculpture there is shaven a kimbemba-ngo (butterfly) pattern. The head is crowned with an elevated hair adornment (tumba). At the mouth there is a mbambi-pipe for it to blow in case of mpaana-war (magical competition between banganga). For when there is a howling storm this is Nsakulu's banganga and their sculptures fighting mpaana-war in order to kill a fellow-nganga; but the latter then gets help from other Nsakulu's banganga, so that he is not killed. Such a war sometimes begins at a court case or a marriage. When banganga have begun to quarrel and fight and cannot be restrained they seek mpaana-war with each other. In a short time the storm breaks forth. Sometimes banganga let some layman who is stupid go before them in the fight, so that he is killed and the banganga go free. The war may also be

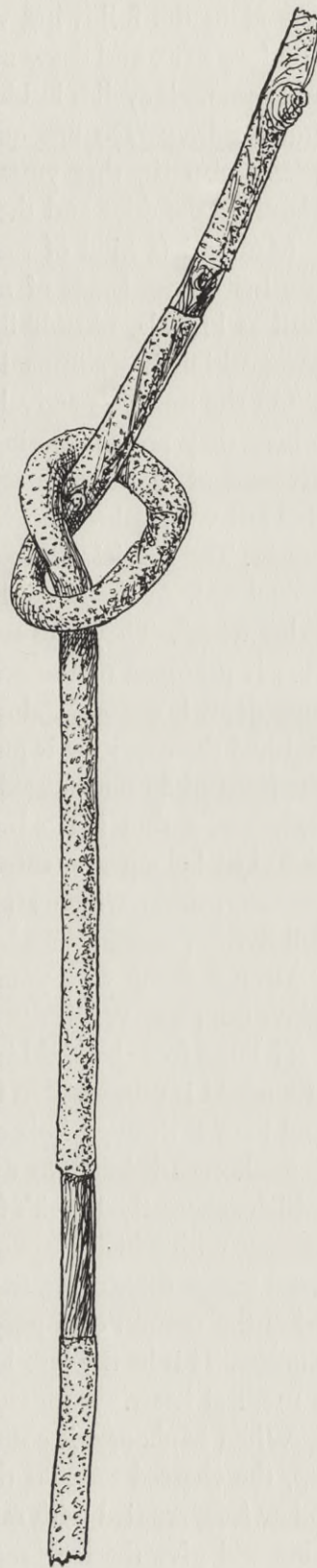


Fig. 20. *Animated liana, Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 458).*



waged in the following way. When the storm has begun the banganga sit crouching as if before a fire and draw mpaana of ash at the corners of their eyes, strew ashes about them and turn their eyelids inside out. They then thrust a knife into the ground and admonish wives and children: "Do not quarrel with one another, be silent, don't thrust out your behinds where you sit, that your places may not be occupied by banganga". The sculptures are placed at the door and the nkubulu-bag is fastened over the shoulder.

Madungi (a kind of tutu-tube) is a nkisi belonging to the Nsakulu class. The medicine consists of the heads of mpidi, kimbandya, lweela, kanza, dimba and mboma snakes as well as lunyala, nkandikila, nsamba and Congo pepper. Finally a cock is sacrificed. The composition is accompanied by drumming.

On the nganga's arrival top leaves of palm are sent for to be arranged round the place where they are composing the nkisi. The leaves are cut in two parts and palm branches divested of their leaves are thrust into the ground in the same way, the top leaves being tied fast with palm branches. A stone is put in the centre, which is consecrated with chalk marks. The medicine is fetched and a part is hung up to afford magical protection for what is enclosed. At the same time they cry in chorus: "Tee". (Reply) "Teeta". "Koo". "Koola, palm wine". They also say: "Tee". "Teeta". "Koo". "Koola, tie a knot". Then the medicine is prepared to the accompaniment of singing and drum-beating. Very little of each ingredient is cut off. Palm wine is then drunk and the cutting up continues. When this is finished the medicine is put in nkisi's bag and another medicine is cut up to be stuffed into the horn of an uncastrated billy-goat. This is the nkisi's male part. Before this is prepared, however, a shot is fired and songs sung. The nkisi medicine is drunk from the horn. To the nkisi belong also mbwanga-amulets whose medicine is snuffed up into the nose and madungi-tubes which are threaded on a string attached to the horn. Nkisi's laws are as follows.

Do not stamp with your legs at your house. If you go up a mountain and reach the top, blow the pipe. When the nkisi is being blessed the people may not run around.

Sickness from bandoki is treated with nkisi Madungi, for it belongs to the family Nsakulu. If a ndoki is caught, then fetch your neighbour and kill the ndoki. Next, sprinkle the nkisi and bless it through kola-nuts and hang it up in its accustomed place.

Muhongo belongs to the Nkiduka family and consists of a shell or pot with whisk, to which are attached cock's feathers, mfwenge-skin (mongoose-skin) and coils of the kinkoyi-creeper with which loops of dry banana leaf have been tied. Further, a menstruating woman must scrape these clean, sit on them and lie on them for two to three days. The nganga then takes the cocoon of a praying mantis and a sack or the like in which salt has come from Europe. This he ties into loops with kinkoyi-creeper. Inside is medicine, and on the outside a medical heart.

When Muhongo is composed they take two frogs, one of which is immediately burned up, the charred remains then being ground with salt and put into shells. The legs of the other frog are tied with raffia-fibre and kinkoyi-creeper, after which they cut up the medicine and give the frog some to drink. The beast is now released and may wander about

in the houses of the village. No-one touches it, for the frog is known to be the kinkonko of the village.

If a great event is impending the frog croaks very much; it pants and pants. Then all must be on the alert and refrain from going anywhere in the direction of enemies, for they may be attacked there.

Muhongo inspires to war and protects his friends. With his whisk the nganga tries to smell out whether the enemy is close or not, whether they have many guns or not. If the nganga smells a bad smell he admonishes the villagers to be cautious and to take care, for they may be shot. If, on the other hand, there is a pleasant smell, he charges them to go to the attack and fight. This nganga is called kitombudi (leader up to the heights), and goes in the van.

If war breaks out the nganga at once consecrates the warriors by pouring night-old palm wine and stagnant water into the shell, sometimes also salt. He stirs this up and gives them some of it to drink. He dips his finger-tips into the shell and taps them on his forehead, smears his nose and draws lines to chest and shoulders. He thus "bathes" himself with mpitu-grease. Then the nganga stands with his knuckles on the shell and asks: "It is to-morrow, isn't it?" "Precisely to-morrow". "They have gone past?" "They have just gone past". "But they have intended?" "They have intended precisely us". Sometimes he turns the shell upside down and asks: "Shall we go thither or shall we not go thither?" Then he pulls the shell with little jerks as if it were moving by itself. If the shell does not move, they are not to go. If the enemy is near and powerful and is coming to burn the village, the nganga at once puts the shell into water. The sky then collects water which streams down to scatter the enemy.

Muhongo's nganga can also go to the enemy's palms, climb them, stir the contents of the shell and pour it, together with a medicine of lemba-lemba, into the small calabashes in the palms. He then buries ndingi-copal on the enemy's village roads to still (dingidika) their hearts.

Thus when the enemies go to their palms they drink Muhongo's medicine in the wine and all their fear vanishes, so that they are agog to go and pay a visit to their enemies and fear nothing. But then they can easily be ambushed and attacked.

The shell is also able to keep alive one who is on the point of dying if, for instance, one of his close relatives is expected home from a trading trip or if they have not yet got hold of cloth for the shroud. The nganga then turns the shell upside down and lays it on the sick person on the bed. He takes a string and ties it round the left leg of the sick man, so that he may live for another two or three weeks, until what they have been expecting takes place. The nganga then takes away the shell and the sick man soon dies. If the nganga becomes seriously ill, is hit by a bullet or dreams bad dreams he knocks on the shell and drinks from it, along with his wife and children. Sometimes he ties up his *binkoyi* and raffia cords and twines them round his arms, for Muhongo has a long life.

If he is to go on a journey he takes the shell with him in the *nkutu*-bag. The shell foretells any impending danger by drying up in the bag.

Muhongo's or Mukiduka's token is charcoal from milolo and misenge trees, which is ground and put in the shell while they say: "The wood of the male nganga is misenge-tree and milolo-tree".

One who is going to war smears on nose and chest some of this black grease called mpitu, after which he takes milolo and mfili leaves to cover his loins and the small of his back to protect himself magically.

Nkiduku (from kidika—to protect magically) is a special protective nkisi; but other minkisi are also so designated when they are protective amulets or rain-minkisi.

Nkiduku is found in pots or shells. The composition ceremonies are sometimes like those occurring in connection with Mutinu mamba, for this, too, emerged from the water and was carried up to the village.

When Nkiduku is being composed they put the simbi-frog and a lot of knots of raffia bast into the pot. These are separated in the middle of the pot like a wall, the one half being male and the other female.

Sick people are not treated with Nkiduku. But if someone is sick to the point of death and a close relative is for example expected back from a trading trip, hen's feathers are tied up with fibres and bound fast to the left leg of the sufferer, so that he may live until the relative gets home. The medicine is then removed and the sick man dies.

Nkiduku is a protective nkisi in war. It also finds out who may go to war without being wounded or killed. Frequently the whole village, both the people and the ground, is sprinkled with chalk and medicine. The men and women then drink out of the pot. They stir the contents of the pot, and if a lump of scum is formed they know that someone will be wounded or die. They then pulverize bonzo-medicine and strike the pot with their knuckles. Both men and women do this, saying: "To-morrow they will go past. Shall we follow them? Let us catch up with them again".

Nkiduku protects its master from all possible dangers, so that he may live for a long time and get grey hair. He is not, on the other hand, able to procure great possessions.

If someone dreams incessantly of deceased ancestors he must drink from Nkiduku, so that the dream may cease.

If anyone's fellow-nganga has died he should likewise drink from Nkiduku, so that they do not see each other every day. One sick to the point of death should drink from Nkiduku and place it at his side. They then bind a nsunga-ring to the luveeta-tree on the plain, so that he may live. When the sick man has recovered he should turn Nkiduku upside down at the head of the bed.

If no rain falls the nganga should soak Nkiduku in water and cover it with green leaves. The nganga, too, must bathe. The rain soon comes through Nkiduku, for when it is taken out of the water there is a great storm with rain and thunder. If anyone sets out on a journey he should take Nkiduku with him, in order not to be attacked and bound by the enemy.

Mwandazi is a nkisi whereby a wife is rendered inaccessible for other men. The nganga fastens a medicine bundle to the corner of the loin-cloth at the girdle. If, this notwithstanding, anyone should commit adultery with the wife, he will be punished by Mwandazi,

who makes him sterile. If the woman's husband has died, the one who has inherited her may not go to her at once; he must first summon the nganga who has consecrated her. When the latter has received hens and palm wine and they have eaten and drunken they go to the water with the woman. All banganga go their way, except one, who remains to copulate with the woman. Both then bathe in the water and Mwandazi has then vanished from the woman, so that the one who has inherited her may take her in.

Other groups of *minkisi*, such as *Kodya dya Nzau*, *Nzyodi* and *Kinzyenene*, are also used for the same purpose.

*Mbenza* is a very well-known *nkisi* in *Mayombe*, who derives from *basimbi*, that have been consecrated for this purpose. *Mbenza* used to be a tribal *nkisi* for the in former times powerful *Mbenza*, with their *Kimbenza* dominion. It can, certainly, give rise to and cure breast tumours and headache etc., but its chief function is to open the womb for a rich progeny. *Mbenza* is therefore invoked with, *inter alia*, the following words: "Hear us, your people. Give blessings at the birth of the children. Take away what hinders. Open the doors, my lord. May they come happily. May they return with health to the village at *Mpungu's* heart, *Ngovo Mbenza*. She did not give birth to the child, close the gates. (*Banganga* may not see "the way"). His own she gave birth to. Open the gates, *Sir Mangundazi* (a *simbi* chief; according to *LDKF*, p. 495, *Mangundazi*="personne d'un grand honneur"). Open them quickly. She must give thanks as becomes a woman, give thanks gracefully".

When *Mbenza* is composed and *bisimbi* are taken aside for the purpose the procedure goes forward with many ceremonies, with singing and beating of drums. The *ngudi a nganga* and the novices besmear themselves with *ndimba-red* and chalk. They must make marks all over their bodies with earth from the *kukwa-termite* hill. They draw curving lines on each other at the eyes, all to the accompaniment of singing, e.g.:

|                              |                   |
|------------------------------|-------------------|
| O, mavundu mu                | O, holes in       |
| Meno ma ndubukila (ndwenga)! | the wisdom teeth! |
| Ngondo yo bakila!            | Moon, mend them!  |
| Mpembe, O, yaaya!            | Chalk, o yaaya!   |
| O, yaaya, ngondo ami!        | O yaaya, my moon! |

Many people assemble. The *nganga* must dress himself in bead necklace, cap and parrot-feather tuft on the brow and dance well.

Then they sing:  
 O nganga Mbenza,  
 Two mothers are still here  
 Ten others have come to  
 give birth to their first-born  
 O nganga Mbenza!

The novice must be placed in the enclosure (i.e. in nkisi's house) and ngudi a nganga is to explain Mbenza to him. The novice gives a start on the ground and jumps up onto the ndungu-drum, where marks are drawn on him.

They stay for nine nsona-days in the enclosure; on the tenth the enclosure is dismantled. On this day they kill porcupines and nduutu to eat, and there is a great feast.

No woman or man who has not given birth or begotten a child may attend the seeking and consecration of basimbi.

The women may not thrust up their behinds in the direction where simbi is, for he might then throw stones at them, those are, his spears. They are thrown at the breast.

Basimbi in the Kimbenza country is a very large and uneven rock with a path for porcupines. In former times, when it was consecrated, it had been marked with ndimba-red. The child is a kukwa-termite hill that is clad in nine caps and Manyundazi himself was clad in two kunda-caps.

In tracts where there were not many simbi-stones four, five or six banganga teamed up to look for such in the mountains, the ravines and on the plains. It is from these stones that Mbenza is then composed. A number of stones are carried to the village when they betake themselves there to fetch the secret objects that have been concealed so that the novices may seek them out to be blessed and shaped. Into these objects, made by the elders, the spirits of bandoki and deceased persons have entered; they are strong and powerful.

If anyone mentions what he has seen with Mbenza he must die.

When Mbenza is composed it is also necessary to have a sculpture or a couple of sculptures, man and wife, which are carved out of these simbi-stones. Such stone sculptures are rare, and difficult to get hold of (pl. 2).

Along the road leading to the simbi-stone and the sculpture, in the village and the market-place one finds such stones marked with ndimba-red. Those I have collected are of reddish loose sandstone. On the road to Mbenza one finds, further, four gates which are made of the topmost branches of palms, tied together. These are set up in different places and constitute tests for those who enter through the gates. Thus no-one, for example, may go through the first who has not already begotten or given birth to a child. A nduma or ndimba snake keeps watch at this gate. If when healing a sick person ngudi a nganga happens, for instance, to stub his toe against anything in the first gateway, they must return to the village, for ngudi a nganga then knows that the sick man is not to go through.

If, however, ngudi a nganga has not seen any dangerous sign at the first gate, they all stay there with him. Ngudi a nganga blows his horn: "Hui-hui-hui-hui-i-i". "Open the gates, Sir!" At the first gate he blows the horn once, at the second twice, at the third three and at the fourth four times.

"Open the gates, Sir, if anyone has gone to give birth to her first-born." Ngudi a nganga then says: "Mister Mangundazi, open the gates soon. The child is born. We have passed through the gates. We have come to bless the one who has given birth to the child. Oh Sir, may he give birth to other children, may they grow up, cook food and obey the laws. The one who is born in Mbenza is brought up in Mbenza. We thank you, we have

passed through the gates. We have not seen bansinga-nsinga (a burning plant = nettle; a sort of banana). We have not answered. We have not got entangled in any creeper. We eat at night. We forget the foreskin. Forgive your bindende (boys and girls). We have brought palm wine with us. We have brought with us ngongong and instruments to pay our homage and respect." The nganga then blows his horn "Hui-hui-hui-hui-i-i" and lapses into ecstasy.

When this is over they set off again. They must be silent on the way to the place where Mangundazi lives. They give him palm wine and fill his mug four times. He is then consecrated and they must draw lines etc. with ndimba-red and chalk on him.

If anyone has disobeyed some prohibition or has a severe illness the nganga says: "Go and let him confess to Mbenza", after which ensues the above-described ritual.

Simbi is a water-nkisi that lives in the water and generally consists of a small ntumbu-calabash. It contains all sorts of medicines and on the outside byala mooko pips, palaba-beans etc. are strung on a cord.

Simbi's nganga has the mboma-ndongo snake (the python) as kinkonko, and this reptile is therefore called nkisi Simbi's brother. Mboma ndongo is larger than ordinary mboma-snakes. Anyone who is thrown into ecstasy by this nkisi is worthy to receive mboma. But when he goes to the water he must take food with him and throw it to mboma in the pond where the latter dwells.

When a novice is to compose Simbi he must go to a house or enclosure to bathe, shake with ecstasy and dance. He may not do any work. He must have a band about his head the whole time. The women collect lots of food for the novice and ngudi a nganga. The female novices are clad in mbwela-beads, mayongoso-bells and little bells round their hips. They are, furthermore, magically well protected and consecrated.

A nganga may not eat manioc or fish that has been caught the same day. He may not lie with his wife in the same bed, for in this case nkisi would become powerless.

When the novice has completed his training and is to begin healing he must always remember his ngudi a nganga and mention his name. When healing he draws lines on the brow, the temples, the shoulders, legs and arms. He must have a band tied about his forehead. For the treatment also sweating baths on charcoal from mbota-wood are applied. The fire is to be extinguished by hand by the ecstasies, and fresh banana-leaves are then spread out on it as a couch upon which the sick person is placed to sweat. He is afterwards washed with a cloth.

One sometimes finds a small sculpture with a human face; the lower part consists of a number of things twisted together, attached bands, binsansi-seeds and nzimbu-beads. The payment must always be kept in this so that it can be hung up.

This nkisi is hung up on a gable-wall together with four nkwanga-bells on one side. The following prohibitions and instructions are associated with it.

Before jumping over a ditch throw a stalk of grass. Do not drink water from a ditch. Do not dig a grave. If you ferry infants over a watercourse, say: "Now we have ferried across". If you see a maseese-fish do not touch it. Do not break a piece from ngola or ntondya

fish while the child is being suckled, for then the child will be "broken" from the breast. If you take hold of the child without first having "bathed" with lwangu-lwangu, the child will be unclean. If you see manioc soaked in water and taken up for the day's consumption, hold your hands before your eyes so that you shall not become unclean.

Nkita is the name of a nkisi and also of the little animals that are said to enter the body, where they bite and sting and give rise to swellings and aches. There are different Nkita, such as e.g. Nkita nsi, Nkita nsumbu and Nkita nyombe (in Mayombe). The Nkita family derive from Mbenza and belong to the water minkisi. Nkita can live both underground and in the water; Mbenza, again, lives in the middle of the rapids, at sources or in streams.

Nkita nsumbu causes swellings and boils all over the body, for Nkita throws stones at the sick person. If the latter has sores all over him then Nkita has thrown knives or needles. If the sick person is ailing for a long time, he falls into convulsions and may not eat pork. Nor may he eat ngondo-monkeys, yimba and tiba bananas if there is an older person in the house unless he smokes out the house with luyangu-yangu herbs.

When the nkisi is composed and they leave the vwala-shed they must prepare a feast from all kinds of animals. In one and the same pot they put animals of all species. Four pots are to be boiled, to supply strangers and the villagers themselves.

Nkita nsi is as a rule in a nsaava-calabash containing chalk, tondo, nkandikila etc., as well as semo-shell of mama shape. It is kept on the chest or at the bedside at home.

It is composed on a mat, where the novices sit cross-legged and covered with a blanket.

When it has been composed a goat is slaughtered and the blood of the animal smeared on the nkisi. Nkisi's nganga may not eat pork, nsombe-liver, minkanya-potatoes, the nkumbi or haloto tree or yimba or tiba bananas.

Nkita nsi also causes boils and sores all over the body or in the joints. The medicine used to treat these consists of powder found in nkisi as well as partridge's eggs and byala-mooko (fruit). The nganga draws with chalk in patches all over the body of the sufferer and rolls the eggs over them.

To this nkisi are made both assurances and invocations in case of theft etc.

Ndundu (albino) is a water nkisi that has been taken out of the water. The nganga did not find it through his own skill; he went into a rapture in the village and the ecstasy led him to the water, where he disappeared. He arrived at the village of Ndundu's ngudi a nganga and here he got him to compose nkisi.

In the lake whence Ndundu came an otter (*Potomogale velox*) resembling a dog was swimming. It had a white belly and dark tail that looked like the tail of a fish. This was Ndundu's dog. The lake was called Ndundu and was a forbidden lake.

Ndundu consists of a futu-bag with ordinary medicine. It is used for the treatment of an ailment which causes swollen belly combined with extreme emaciation of other parts of the body. The treatment is generally as follows. The nganga takes powder from the salu bag with his fingers and grasps the sufferer, saying: "Blow out, blow out (vwela)". He then rubs his little fingers together, shakes his hands, claps, takes more powder and

places his hands on his head, saying: "The dreams you dreamed are good. Do not carry him to the water or to the ravines".

The nganga then grinds medicine from nkisi, takes a little of it and throws it away, saying: "They eat, they eat!" Again he takes a small portion, and says: "They do not eat, they blow out". He then takes a little which he gives to the sick person to eat, after which the medicine is handed over to the sufferer so that he may treat himself daily with it and with chalk.

If the nganga himself falls ill he must be treated at the sheet of water called Ndundu. When he arrives he dives straight into the lake with his loin-cloth, his basket and his stick in his hand. It might be thought that he has dived into the water, but this is the road to Ndundu's village, and the old ancestor comes and meets him to show him the way to his house, where the nganga may eat and drink, after which he is treated.

When the nganga returns to the village he has been besmeared with chalk and tukula-red, his head is shaved and he is adorned with feathers from the parrot and the pelican.

He also has with him a medicine which he is to drink in case of a relapse.

Others are forbidden to bathe in Ndundu; they may not even wade in the water. If people want to cross it they must use a canoe. If anyone is walking on the shores of Ndundu and nkisi does not like him, he strikes him with dim sight, binds him, throws him in the lake and lets him sink to the bottom. The victim disappears for ever.

One day a group of Vili (Balwangu) went for a walk. When they reached Ndundu they did not know this was a forbidden lake, so they drank of the water. When they had drunk, they said to one another: "Let us bathe!" When they took off their clothes and threw themselves into the water they vanished below the surface and sank to the last man. Only one had stayed on shore to look after their things. He survived and returned weeping to his country.

Londa is a well-known nkisi for women in childbed and for infants. There are several variants, e.g. Londa dya nsitu (Londa of the woods), which is composed in the forest, and Londa dya makanga (Londa of the plains), which is composed on the plain. In the north they are also referred to as Londo kya mabuta (Londa for women in childbed) and Londa kya malele (Londa for their nursing). There is also a Malonda mankosula (Londa for throwing).

Londa belongs to the water species and derives from the Mutinu family. In appearance it is not large, and it has no salu bag. The medicine is placed in the bark from a log of wood and tied up. There is chalk as well as other articles with a pleasant smell, such as nsaku-nsaku, kinkoki (a creeper), mponi and mfulengi. These are ground and mixed with the chalk. Londa is suspended from the roof and may not be outside the house.

Londo also has the capacity to "shut" fertility. If a woman does not conceive, the nganga must chop midyaka-powder and give some to her. If this does not help he blesses the woman, that she may give birth to a child, twists dry leaves of ndongila bananas with cords with inserted down from poultry. On the cords are then threaded Calabar and simani beans, and he once more blesses the woman with midyaka-powder.



The payment for this is a hen. The following instructions are given: "You must not in the near future eat ntooba-stew or beans and mumbodi-manioc. If you get a girl, call her Kilonda!"

If the child is treated the nganga says, inter alia: "You are born through Londa, you are fostered through Londa", i.e. through the nganga's treatment with Londa.

When the nganga becomes an old man he teaches one of his children to compose Londa, so that it may be retained in his kanda.

Londa's madibu-bells are called mpovila (from vova, speak).

The chief rules are that husband and wife may not quarrel and that neither should refuse to obey the other, e.g. in such matters as the fetching of wood or water. The child may not refuse to eat its food, for then it will become unclean. If husband and wife quarrel they must snap their fingers (*dia lunsafi*) immediately afterwards, otherwise the child will be desecrated. If one of them refuses to do some work and is forced to do it in wrath or with violence, the child becomes unclean and falls ill. If anyone comes to the place where nganga Londa is teaching a child, the person in question must first dance, and then sit down. If someone sits down during a dispute he may not drink palm wine in that place. If he drinks palm wine and does not dance, the child becomes ill.

If the mother goes to the field with the child she may not place it under a kyenga-tree, nor may she fan the child's face with fresh green leaves, for in this case she will become unclean. The mother also becomes unclean if she bathes the child in a streamlet. If they should be caught in the rain, the mother must first stop at the front wall of the hut before entering. She may not wring out the loin-cloth that has been wetted by the rain, for this would imply that she was wringing out the child at the breast. The loin-cloth is put out in the sun to dry. The mother may not go where there is a corpse, nor may she bewail it. The child may not take hold of or eat dung. Neither mother nor child may handle a goat-skin belt, nor may they eat on it. The child may not enter a graveyard. If it does so, the mother must wash herself with *lwangu-lwangu*, otherwise the child will become unclean. The mother may not go to a grass fire, market or dance unless she is shown there by a nganga, or she will fall ill. If the child is healthy but cries all the time, the mother must sing Londa-songs and call for the child at crossings. The medicine with which the child is treated consists of, inter alia, chalk, *nkandikila*, *tondo*, *nkiduku*, *luzibu*, *luyala*, *luteete-seed*, *nsaku-nsaku* and *nsamba-pepper*.

When the child is taken from home for the first time they must keep a vigil from evening till morning. Then the nganga must let the child step over the cross-roads.

With regard to Londa *dya makanga*, it should be mentioned that after giving birth to her child the mother may not take hold of a hoe or a knife, may not go into the woods, fetch wood or cross a watercourse etc. until the nganga has given her a hoe or a knife, led her into the woods or over the watercourse. Her head must be shaved by the nganga.

Malonda for a cough is kept in a *lukatu*-box together with various other medicines, which are either sprayed on the heart of the infant with kola-nut or put in a pot, boiled and drunk. If the child coughs blood, the medicine must be boiled in palm wine.



Fig. 21. Contents of a nkisi-bag, Sudi in Mayombe (Laman 593).

Muhingu's (Ngingu's) name may be explained as follows: Funza has crossed the child's legs, but Muhingu must take away what Funza has set. One who has been born with poor hunting luck will have good luck and happiness if he is treated with Muhingu.

Muhingu belongs to the land-nkisi. Muhingu lifts up children and helps them to walk if they have been born feeble. He also catches rats for human traps, so that the latter catch the rats.

Muhingu consists of a little salu bag. It lies in a little nkutu-bag embroidered with borders of goat's eye pattern, which is carried on the shoulder or hung up on a hook in the house. It is hung up at the door and covered with a banana-leaf.

When Muhingu is composed the natives take stalks of grass (minga), banana-garbage and lufudya-dust from foot-prints where people have passed by, as well as the foreskin of a he-goat. When all these items are burned, Muhingu gives luck to those who compose the nkisi and bad luck to those from whom the lufudya-dust has been taken.

When the medicine has been stored and tied up in the mafutu-bags they take a chicken, cut off its claws and let the blood drip onto the nkisi. A light is then set to gunpowder, and they whirl round in the smoke with the masalu-bags while Muhingu is consecrated.

Seven men may compose Muhingu together, no female helpers are needed. The mbenderat is the sacred animal of the paramount nganga.

If the nganga is to treat a child that is unable to walk, he burns the foreskin of a he-goat together with stalks of grass and banana-garbage. He then lays two knives on raffia-cloth and puts the child on the cloth. The nganga rattles the kunda-rattle near its head and strikes it on the feet and knees with a knife. He then makes the child eat the charred foreskin, the stalks of grass and the banana-refuse. The goat's blood must be smeared on Muhingu's salu bag to placate nkisi, so that the latter may let the child walk. The effect of the foreskin is to make the child strong and jump up and down with zest.

If the child cannot walk, this means that bandoki have entangled the legs. The parents then go to Nkondi's nganga, who smells out the cause. It may be bandoki or the child's ancestors that have "shut" their progeny. If a ndoki has already spat musanzavulu-juice on the child, it becomes lame. In this case they summon Kula's nganga, who prepares the magic guns of darkness. He also goes to a grave and takes some hair and a finger from the corpse. On returning to the village he requests the father to give him a hen, which is sacrificed. Its blood is dripped onto the magic guns to make them still more powerful.

He then sets the guns on the roads of the village and at the corners of the houses, where bandoki go in to spy on the children. The nganga then takes the head of an angry dog, the heads of a cock and a mpidi-snake. These he twists together to form nkinda-magic at the door of the dwelling, and a mukiibu-tree is planted at nkinda.

The head of the dog pursues the ndoki and bites him when he comes to spy on the child; mpidi's head keeps a close watch on the ndoki and sprays its fatal venom when the ndoki comes near, so that the latter dies once and for all. The head of the cock frightens the ndoki, giving him the impression that it has already crowed, so that it will soon be dawn, when the ndoki must immediately turn back.



Fig. 22. Stone-sculpture, Nkisi Mbenza Mangundasi, Sundi in Kiobo (Laman 545).

When a woman has given birth to a child that can walk, she thanks Muhingu by sacrificing a goat.

Nzau is a nkisi that is generally used to make children fatter and give them beautiful shining bodies.

When the child is born the mother blesses it immediately by blowing Nzau on it. She also gives it a drink. Among the numerous injunctions the mother must obey are the following. If the child sneezes, say: "It is Nzau". The child must not receive titbits, nor may it be suckled by any but the mother. It may not be bathed when people are nearby and gossiping. The mother must not eat salt if she is dissatisfied, nor may she eat palm-nuts or kyema-sugar-cane with others; and she must not eat at all by a fire. If the mother goes out with her child she must chat, and say: "Let us go, don't lag behind", until they reach the village they have thought of visiting. If on occasion the mother should not be saying

anything she must run quickly. She may not show the child her tongue, may not jab it in the stomach with her finger or thump its back. If she does so, she must "transmit" the blow from the back to the face and tap the child on the head. If they see a hen caught the mother must pluck a feather from its neck and lay this on the child's head.

Nzau is also referred to as Nzau bena ba nsava. There are many stories concerning this nkisi.

Nzau is used in other tracts in the character of an elephant. It consists of a futu-bag; its function is to remove prohibitions from food etc. They take a bit of the elephant-skin in nkisi Nzau and put it in the food, which is then no longer forbidden — anyone may eat of it. One may strike forbidden palms and nsafu-trees etc. with nyondo-cactus, after which they are no longer forbidden.

Diila (bag) kya Nzau and Kodya (shell) dya Nzau are composed and used to achieve success and take away others' envy. For the composition a very juicy creeper (ndidi) is taken from the woods and put in the middle of this nkisi — it is supposed to dower the possessor richly with goods.

Kodya dya Nzau's nganga may not go and strike the field of another with his staff, for this would mean that he would be casting a spell on the harvest and taking it with him. In the same way he can put a spell upon other things.

If a woman has given birth to a thin child she must call on Kodya dya Nzau's nganga and get him to treat it. When he begins he asks: "Shall I throw it away?" — "A-a-a, don't throw it away!" The nganga has first put the child on the rubbish-heap, but now he goes and fetches it and stands astride it, whereupon the child grows big and flourishes.

Mvutudi (the restorer) is a general name for the minkisi that are used to restore the nsala-soul to sick persons and to those who have seen the dead (in dreams); the natives believe that the souls of the latter are "on the wane".

Mvutudi is composed to the accompaniment of singing and beating on the drum. They sing, for example, "The soul of the child in the bangu-cloth (bangu=female loin-cloth worn in front). E, yaayi e-e. Let go! It is in the bangu-cloth", or: "Mothers, let go, let go".

When the nganga has arrived and consecrated himself he consecrates the house by chalking on the ground at the door, behind the house and at the projection of the roof. He then leads out the sick person by holding out his staff to him to take hold of. When they get outside they stand on a mat which the nganga consecrates, after which he performs the same ceremony over the patient. He then drips medicine into the eyes of the sufferer. This medicine consists of tumbangu-mbangu and mundanda nzila. He now blows palm wine into the patient's face. The wine also contains nsamba-pepper and nsaku-nsaku. If the sick person is curable he falls at once into ecstasy.

The nganga or the song-leader begins to sing, the drummer to beat on the drum, while the hired ecstasies begin ecstatically to smell out where the nsala-soul of the sick person is. They sing, for example: "E, marry, he married, he has stolen, they follow. He has an infant" or: "E-e-e, that goat! But that goat shrieks! E, roast peanuts! It has eaten them up, it shrieks e-e".

When in the state of ecstasy the nganga's helpers are looking for nsala they may wander hither and thither in the grass, in the woods, to the graveyard of their people, and fight with those who have hidden nsala. If it is in the earth they must carry earth under their loin-cloth and place it on the body of the patient, which signifies that nsala has returned.

Before the seekers reach the sick person, the nganga has prepared a piece of cloth for the ecstasies, and this they are to lay on the head of the patient three times. This shows that nsala has come back, for otherwise it is impossible for them to lay the cloth on the patient's head. Then the singing comes to an end.

The nganga then prepares medicine for bathing and for the patient to drink if he sees that he has a pain in the belly. Medicine for bathing is made of langu and bunsu, and for drinking of lemba-lamba and lemba-ntoko.

The restored patient may not eat nsongi-fish or answer calls when he is in the woods.

Kyaba, the medicine mixture, consists of cut up leaves from nlolo, mfilu, mwindu, mundanda nzila, wormwood, tumbangu-mbangu, makinda ngolo, mpolo-mpolo, kimbanzya, boiled palm-nuts, chalk and yellow ochre, which are used for the sanctifying of the sick person. They sing: "Bathe chalk, one day I shall become a nganga" or: "Chalk, give me life! Eh, give me life". When the sick man is sanctified he is lifted up on the skin of a monkey, mfwenge or mbongi. When the process of sanctification is over he is blessed by the nganga, who takes palm wine in his mouth from a medical nsaku-calabash, grasps the patient with both hands and says: "O, I treat him with mpolo-medicine, I treat him with red ndembo-powder. May you become healthy!" He then spits the palm wine on the side and back of the sick person, all this to the accompaniment of drum-beating and the shaking of rattles.

Next, those who are able to fall into ecstasy (ntombo) stand up to smell out whether nsala is on land or in the water. They take nsaku-calabashes, rattles and little bells with them.

During the smelling out procedure they sing: "Eh, the kintombo-bird has gone to smell out. Eh, make ready". Meantime they cry at intervals: "E, zyo!" — "Zyola!" "Mana!" — "Nanguna!" "Mawa!" — "Wangula!" "When I have sought through downwards, then I have sought through upwards. Kimpalu has taken hold of bwa!" — "Kibwidi".

After an eager search hither and thither they hear, for example, that nsala is in a tree or in a zobe-jar.

The nganga sanctifies the tree or the jar in the same way as he sanctified the sick man. If the zobe-jar is sanctified all the women present at the treatment must pour water into the jar until it is full. Then the whole crowd stand up and form a ring around the patient, stamping violently and beating loudly on the drum.

The ecstasies who are with the sick man in order to smell out where they can find his nsala are agog with urgency. They say: "Bring hither, O mother!" — "Mother!" Then they blow on the pipe pe-pe-pe. Now they sing: "Eh, let us follow the path the old people have taken" and so forth.

Then they lapse into ecstasy, come together, take the zobe-jar and pour the water over the sick man's body. The banganga say: "O, cry in chorus, cry in chorus in wo-o".

They ask: "Eh, has it come?" "Eh, you fathers, you mothers, has nsala come to the child?" "O, it has gone there!" "O, we spit on it. O, we spit on it!"

Next, the patient is given a steam-bath or is bathed in medicine to increase the nsala-soul, so that it may become whole. They sing: "E, children, nsala has turned up, increase it".

The treated person may not eat animals that have died a natural death. If a pig has been slaughtered, he may not eat its snout or ears. He may not eat fish that has scales, and must not reply to cries in the dark, or go out when it is dark. If it is absolutely necessary, then someone must go with him. Wood and water he must have fetched by others.

At Kibunzi they call Mvutudi "Nsevi" (who laughs), if they have danced the whole night, destroyed possessions in vain in order to buy palm wine or to pay the nganga, without having found nsala and without being able to make the sick man healthy.

For the composition of nkisi medical herbs etc. are fetched in the state of ecstasy, so that all may know that they are the right ones. Among the herbs may be noted mundanda nzila, nsunda, makinda ngolo, mfilu, tumbangu-mbangu, mansusu etc. The nganga sits with the novices to cut up a medicine from mfimbu, tumsi, sempe, nsaku-nsaku, tondo, nkandikila, lufulangi and chalk etc. They sanctify themselves by smearing chalk and ngunza-red on their temples, brows and other parts of the body.

After this a nsolo-pip is swallowed, nkisi is tied firmly to the raffia-cloth and put in a knitted bag. Resin is pressed onto the sculpture together with feathers of ngundu byolo. Friends are then summoned and a great crowd, to hide all kinds of articles which the nganga is to find, in order to show that he is a real nganga. In the meantime those present sing and beat the drum.

The one who has composed nkisi must now begin to smell out the articles until he finds what has been hidden. In this way he proves himself to be a nganga with sensitive nostrils. No-one may strike the nganga, for then he lapses into ecstasy. If the nganga is struck with a palm-nut, the ecstasy goes over. Every morning he must smear the outer rim of his ears, his brow, his chest, navel, wrists, the region of the heart, his shoulders with chalk and ngunza-red (dye of red clay). In this way he is consecrated.

## Dyatu and other Minkisi

Dyatu is a nkisi for dogs, to prevent their being taken by the python mboma ndongo, as this nkisi is also called.

If anyone has a dog that has been taken by a python, such a snake is immediately killed and its head cut off and dried. The person who is to compose the nkisi sends for the head, a calabash of palm wine and a cock. When ngudi a nganga arrives he looks for the requisite medicine. First chalk is taken, then other, ordinary medicine and the heads of a python and of kanza, mpidi and kimbandya snakes. The medicine is placed in a bag of raffia-cloth which has been sewn with a needle. The python head is placed at the bottom. Then the head of a cock is cut off over nkisi so that the blood drips on it to give it strength. Finally, gunpowder is ignited.

When a little bell has been fastened to the dog let it climb up to the ridge of the roof and then jump down onto the ground, and you yourself will get strength. Do not rub the dog's nose on the ground. If you should forget yourself, lift up the muzzle! Do not give the dog bones of the nduutu-rodent. A woman may not show her pubes to the dog. If it should become unclean, bless it together with your nkisi.

If a nganga has nkisi Dyatu and meets other hunters, and there is a quarrel about the hunting, he should immediately go away. He must take a blade of grass and throw it at the spot, so that their dogs may be taken by the python. If an animal is shot, its urine should be dripped into the dogs' noses and they should be made to jump, so that they will hunt still better.

Kimfwila is a war-nkisi. It is small, but strong to withstand enemy bullets. It has a sculpture and a shell, from which one drinks in war-time.

It is composed secretly under blankets and cloth. Besides ordinary medicine consisting of chalk, nkiduku etc. the natives take bungi (invisibility), three times nine knots of dry tiba-leaves and three times nine ndongila-banana leaves, which are placed first in the shell together with arms and legs of the kimbiti-frog. This, together with the medicines previously prepared, is placed in the sculpture while they sing:

“Whither has he gone, e-e-e mother!  
Shell peanuts and hide yourself to-morrow-e!  
O-e-e, hide yourself to-morrow-e-e!” and so on.



When they have stopped singing they put a medical "heart" in the sculpture, collect a lot of wood, make a fire and place the sculpture and the shell in the middle. If the sculpture and the shell are burnt, then one of those who have composed the nkisi will die. If, on the other hand, the sculpture and the shell are recovered when the fire is out, this means that those who have composed nkisi have very robust health. Among the prohibitions may be mentioned the following.

When at war do not touch one who has been hit by a bullet. Do not go before those who are in the thick of the fight, but let your helpers go first. When you follow them, point first the butt end of your gun in the direction of the fighting. Then turn the gun round and do not shoot at once, but first tie a knot in a tussock of grass and tramp on it — then you may shoot. You may then go around mfilu and nlolo trees, either in company or alone. Never call to one another in war.

This nkisi can also give rain if the sculpture and the shell are covered with banana-leaves.

Nsumbu is a nsanga-calabash. There is also a salu bag with powder, in which medicine is kept. The one is the mother, the other the child. Besides Nsumbu there are also other kinds of minkisi for the same purpose.

Nsumbu, which is also called Bamfumu, is a nkisi for pigs. Its medicines are taken from ravines and from the woods. His nganga may not touch pigs or hold them. Through Nsumbu one may get into a state of rapture. When Nsumbu has been composed the maker goes to a ravine to eat a goat in ecstasy, as Bamfumu is an ecstatic nkisi. The part of the entrails that quivers is put in a little cloth and kept.

Mpungu is composed to put a spell on the cloths, pigs and goats of others. This is done by magic when the nganga says: "These are my possessions, my cloth etc. in that house, my pigs in that sty", which implies that the property remains as far as the outward form is concerned, while Mpungu's nganga has swallowed the inward part through cunning and cleverness, precisely like bandoki. For this reason Mpungu's banganga are hated by the people. That an article has been taken emerges from e.g. the fact that a cloth is quickly devoured by insects, or that a pig dies.

The nganga's house must not be closed at the back, for it is here that the things upon which he has cast a spell are taken in and it is through the back door that the nganga himself goes out to cast his spells.

The novice who is to be taught by ngudi a nganga to compose Mpungu must first give a young man and a virgin that they are to "eat" in kindoki-magic. After this the composition is concluded in secrecy in the house.

The persons who wish to compose this nkisi must be prepared, and must consider carefully whether they are suitable and are able to see the enterprise through to the end, for otherwise it is best to abstain altogether, as Mpungu takes life with him very quickly — in other words, the person may lose his own life into the bargain.

Nakongo is named after one of the very oldest minkisi. Before the composition of Nakongo all sorts of medicines etc. are collected, and then a day is decided upon when ngudi a nganga summons the novices to come to an agreement concerning terms of payment,

food and drink etc. First a nkutu-bag of raffia is sewn — the bottom is of the same material. This is to contain dry medicines. Four parallel lines are sewn down the bag on each side. They then make a lusaba-enclosure with three plants: lubota-tree, dyadya-grass and a palm. The topmost shoot of the palm is bound round the enclosure. In the meantime they sing: "E, mother (yaaya), bird, bird built mfunya hamba's nest. E, yaaya, a bird lolo (built this leaf), it built nto-nto (on different sides)". Meanwhile leaf after leaf is fastened to the enclosure, which is made firm with palm branches.

When they begin the composition ngudi a nganga cries: "Yika, yika (add more), banda, banda (strike), hongonono, hongonono" (the sound of certain kinds of frogs).

A medicine is now rubbed up for the sprinkling of the village. They sing: "Mwe Kongo, a day of peace (kya malembe). A day of peace. Yaaya come and besprinkle the village for me". The following morning two mimbanda women must plait a musaka-basket in the woods. They take with them a pot of food, and then they work, eat and drink until the basket is finished, after which they go home.

A father of twins must bless the leaves by cutting off a piece of medicine, putting it in his mouth with palm wine and squeezing it out on the leaves, saying: "Tell me, did you die? Open your eyes, open your ears! A certain person has come to start a dispute. Make me as sharp as a knife, make me as burning as fire, I am myself a nsimba-twin, I am myself a nzuzi-twin, mpika-day your mpika, bukonzonzo your bukonzonzo-day".

When they place a stone in the enclosure to cut medicine on they dig a little pit and put the medicine and palm wine in it. Then they draw a circle with chalk, nkula-red and charcoal on the stone. Sometimes they also put a piece of raffia-cloth on it. When they place stones over the pit they say: "Those who went on the ground became strong. Those who went to heaven became famous".

The mumbanda-woman who is to grind chalk on the stone may not speak. She must have a feather from the nkuka-bird in her mouth when she grinds chalk, salt, palm wine and leaves. Everything is stirred up and then placed on the edge of the stone in e.g. three heaps together with gunpowder, which is ignited. When they hear nawu-wu (from the gunpowder) all the banganga cry: "Wulu-wulu!" They sing and gesticulate with their arms.

A medicine which excels everything in magic, dangerousness and power is placed in the bottom of the nkisi. It consists of the tail and horns of the mboma-snake, claws of the ngembo-bat, hair from an albino, feathers from albino hens and parrot, white maize and the tumbangu-mbangu herb. Medicine for the treatment of the sick comprises, inter alia, chalk, bunga, tondo, nkandikila, nlondo and ngongo-beans, as well as other ordinary medicines. For the myemo-mixture are used nkomo, malulukulu and kimbidima (nkizu).

Ngudi a nganga invokes nkisi for those he allows to compose nkisi and cut up the requisite medicine. Each medicine has its song. Ngudi a nganga begins thus: "Ri-ri-ri-ri ndundu (albino) mba". — "Mbaka".

When they have finished stuffing in medicine ngudi a nganga and the novices bend down under the enclosure and place nkisi in the middle. The novices cover the head of the paramount nganga, who says: "Yika, yika".

In the evening they must choose those who are to transmit power to Mwe Kongo. When darkness falls they put a pot with raffia fibres over the fire. With the raffia they make a helmet crest. They take a lubota-branch, bend it in the manner of a bow, fit it with a cord and tie raffia fibre to the cord. Then they eat and drink. Later in the evening wife and husband are to go to the interior of their house. Banganga surround the house and sing. The husband embraces (bumangana) his wife three times and blows the mbambi-pipe thrice, after which they go out. The novices fire two or three shots, for Nakongo has tundieta (become a genuine nkisi).

Nakongo may only be composed by one who has begotten a child.

Nakongo is hung up in the house of the brothers-in-law, sometimes on the gable-wall in the interior of the house, sometimes in the porch outside. Then they come, sing, and honour Nakongo: "Baami Nakongo's nganga they laugh at" and so forth. The kikunda-rattle sounds "de-de-de".

After having composed nkisi the nganga must have his fee, after which he gives a list of the prohibitions. The fee is a ntete-basket with twenty hens, a pig worth about 60 francs and a cock that crows as a farewell gift. The nganga may not eat a white hen, or a cock with laymen. Other hens, on the other hand, he may eat with others. Anything which is accounted albino (a white hen, white maize etc.) the nganga may not eat with others, not even with his own children. If the child is very hungry and if he loves it he goes to the other end of the village road and dips the chicken in the grass, whereupon the prohibition is suspended and he may eat with the child. The nganga may not eat goat's flesh, for this will give him a mavizi-rash and the itch.

Nakongo may be as magnificent as Nkondi, give good luck and happiness; but his chief function is to afflict people with illness by way of revenge for crime, and to be invoked by the sick person.

Nakongo gives people hernias, makes their limbs crooked, their bodies swollen and gives them scabs and blisters between toes and fingers.

When a sick person is to be treated he must go to a crossing on a road leading to the village. Here he sits down and stretches out his legs in the direction in which the sun is setting. The nganga makes a ring of nsonga-grass and places a flat stone and the salu bag on it. He spreads out the contents of the latter and begins to tramp on the sick person, after first drawing lines with chalk and tukula-red on his cheeks, brow and arms and binding a little nsungwa-ring on one forearm. Now the sick man's arm is lifted up and massaged, while the nganga says: "Alleviate (the sickness) in a free-born person, remove it in a generous person, bend the tree, do not bow us people, Mwe Nakongo e! Ri-ri-ri-ri eya, relieve, relieve! Loosen, loosen! Bind the pig, bind the hen, bind the goat, but do not bind us, Mwe e!"

If the sick man has boils they prepare a fire of mwindu-wood and pull up tiba and ndongila banana shoots to put on the fire and to massage the sick man with to the accompaniment of the words: "At the water tell me, on land tell me, at the house-post tell me, on the road tell me! Liberate, liberate, liberate!"



Fig. 23. Contents of nkisi Mbenza, Sundi in Lolo (Laman 1358).

Nakongo may also watch over the right and righteousness; he visits thieves and adulterers etc. if a mbwa-object is placed in nkisi. If, for instance, someone has stolen peanuts, pisang or hens, then the person who has been robbed takes a couple of peanuts where these have been stolen, a bit of the stem where the bunch of bananas was growing or, in case of adultery, some hairs while the man is sleeping. If hens have been stolen, then moulted feathers are taken. These objects are called mbwa. They are placed in nkisi as a guide and to reveal the thief, whom nkisi afflicts with sickness or upon whom vengeance is visited in some other way. The object thus placed in nkisi is to serve as a clue for the tracing of the culprit.

If anyone has his manioc eaten up by pigs and the guilty party is not willing to pay for this, the owner pulls up the remaining bits of root and places them in nkisi. If anything disappears in the village, whether from a house or the fields, a mbwa is placed in nkisi to find out its whereabouts.

If bandoki get up to mischief then a mother, for example, if her child has died, tries to get a hair from the corpse to put in nkisi, to ensure that vengeance overtakes the ndoki.

Sometimes the whole village may deny a theft or some other crime. The nganga then goes and fetches Nakongo or some other similar nkisi. The nganga, the despoiled owner and Nakongo go to the end of the road leading to the village and turn their faces towards the latter. The nganga utters exhortations and says: "Nakongo is not to be played with. It devours (ndiilu) terribly. Let the one who has stolen confess, whether woman or man, whether young or old." All in the village po-po-po-po-po-o-o (sound of hand-clapping). "Breast or voice!" "Well, you yourselves desire your death in the village. Tell me, do you repent? I shall bury this nkisi here, I take three of the most dangerous medicines and blow them over the head of a cock and kill and bury it." While the nganga is holding the cock's head and the despoiled owner is holding it by the legs, the former says: "O Sir, Sir, listen, prick your ears, do you not hear? Pull strongly on the Mazinga-side where you produce confusion, where you smash them with your legs and arms, where you afflict them with ruptures and make their limbs swell up, ravish and strike! Do you not see the village? Send much scab to the village, make the headaches worse, make arms and legs crooked. Strew the dead here and there, that there be weeping everywhere!"

The despoiled owner also comes to make his nsibu-assurances: "O Mwe Nakongo (or Mutinu), listen, prick your ears! Look east and west! The village, the house and we people, do you not see us? My pig has disappeared. It is only I. I have no hens, no goat, no raffia-cloth in the house. I have no wrath against men or woman. But I, I, I, Mwe Nakongo (Mutinu), whoever may conceive anger against me — if it is in the daytime, avert it, avert it! If it is at night, Nakongo (Mutinu), avert it! You who do so, in fellowship you have eaten, he makes kyungu-magic to the effect that his house (nzo) may arise with his own people, that they may get miwelo, Mwe Nakongo, but do you not hear?" Whereupon he kills a hen and throws the head into the village, fires a nkisi-shot and goes his way.

When they have buried nkisi in the village the culprits will be afflicted with much pain and suffering in the form of all kinds of illnesses. Accordingly, they fetch a nganga to smell out which nkisi's nganga is to be summoned to take away the mfunya-objects that have been placed in the nkisi in question. When this nganga arrives they first come to an agreement concerning the payment, after which the nganga besprinkles the village with all its houses and the roads surrounding the village. Then he takes away the mfunya-objects and prepares a bonzo-medicine to sprinkle everybody with.

Like Nkondi, Nakongo may attack a human being. For this reason they hammer mfunya-iron into Nakongo and invoke him. In connection with the invocation the nganga first makes a lutata (border around e.g. a nseba-basket) and blesses Nakongo with lusaku-objects and nzo-pepper. He spits five times and says: "You are Nakongo for women. You are Nakongo for men. Open your eyes, open your ears". After which he ties the lutata-border firmly about the round opening of a musaka-basket.

The accused makes a declaration to nkisi, saying: "Behold, if it is I who have taken something belonging to another, then attack me, on land and on water. Mwe Nakongo, father, what may you do? Eat me!" He then pulls nkisi over the lutata-border.

Nkisi's attack is directed towards the chest. It produces a stubborn cough, causes cramp

in the sides and obstructs powerfully until Nakongo's nganga comes and prepares medicine from lemba-lemba to drink. He must put upon the sufferer as it were a carrying band (nzemba) of fresh banana-leaves in which are tied up a kola-nut and an unripe palm-nut. If he then dreams of stupid little chickens, then it is Nakongo that has attacked him.

Nakongo gives good luck in hunting and fishing etc. If an animal has been shot, ngudi a nganga is to eat the heart. For the mimbanda-women a piece of the thigh is cut off.

Where beaters are used for a drive, ngudi a nganga and a father of twins must bless the guns and dogs, tie stalks of grass to the nganga and kola-nuts to the guns, so that they may shoot animals again.

If a man is not killing any game he must drink Nakongo's medicine, for if the body is without strength he gets nothing; but if he goes to Nakongo his strength returns.

When the moon is new the nganga shakes bimpanzi-nzila over his hand and says: "Ah, older sister, mpika died your mpika, bukongo your bukongo-day. The moon is new, come, you, new with it, no manioc, no bananas, no peanuts, nkabi-antelope another's, nsuma-antelope another's, bankongo-antelope another's, the animals in the trap fling themselves hither and thither. A, bayaaya, the one who is born on mpika-day shall come forth to mpika again. Should I throw you away on the rubbish-heap?"

With Nakongo they massage twisted and crooked limbs. They rub with nkisi and massage with banana shoots or by trampling with ash from the rubbish-heap, saying: "On the shore by the water, do (prayer) Nakongo. At the cross-roads, do Nakongo. At the edge of the fire, do Nakongo. In the dew, do Nakongo. Wu-u-u, go down, there are beautiful maidens and young men, yours played on nkwanga-rattles and your choir-singers. Treat inwardly — I treat outwardly."

The patient may not be ferried over a watercourse, nor give a greeting of peace (malembe) in the morning, nor eat nseese, nkembi or ntondy-fish. If the sick man becomes healthy the nganga returns and removes the prohibitions.

When Nakongo's nganga has died they remove his frontlet. The one who removes it is daubed with chalk and leaves by ngudi a nganga. The one who receives the leaves asks himself: "Tell me, is it really his nkisi?" — "Lo (yes)". "Is it his nkisi?" — "Lo". Through nkisi he then goes into ecstasy and then shakes the corpse. He shall occupy the dead man's place and revive the dead man's nkisi. He shall get to know the nkisi because he has taken the frontlet. They remove old mfumbu-resin etc. and replace it with new mfumbu-resin.

Nakongo is also called Makongo and is Makongo Banga, Makongo Mpanzu and Makongo ma Mvangu, and is a nkisi of gladness. Makongo Banga has his place in the branches of a bamboo. Here the medical heart is attached with gum, and from time to time kola-nuts are placed on the "heart". It causes ignorance and madness.

Makongo Mpanzu derives from Mpanzu. The latter seizes people by the side of the chest and squeezes to produce a cramp so one is ready to die. The sufferer is treated with a wooden cross. It is placed along the ribs to relieve the cramp.

Persons with squashed noses are also treated with this nkisi.

Makongo Mpanzu is kept in a hoop-shaped osier basket and placed on the ridge of the roof.

Makongo ma Mvangu has his name from the mvangu (staff) which has, when erect, a nkisi at its upper end. It has a medicine bag with diba-fungus, charcoal from a smithy and tondo-fungus etc., with which the sick person is treated. The illnesses in question are various kinds of insanity.

In the composition Makongo's wife also enters. When the nganga treats a sick man he says: "Born through Makongo, brought up through Makongo. Nkisi treats inwardly. I shall treat outwardly". The nganga now begins to draw lines from the shoulder down over arms and legs.

Mwe Nsundi or Madungu (rupture) is Mister Nsundi (who afflicts with great ruptures). This nkisi belongs to the Nsakulu family. He is not a great nkisi and there is no drumming in connection with the composition. He consists of a nkubulu-bag and a pot. In the latter are placed lutumbu-bark fibres of palm, and on top of these ground chalk and salt stirred up with palm wine and munkwiza-juice. The pot is quite small, about the size of a mug. In the nkubulu-bag are to be found chalk, maize, fresh manioc and fresh peanuts. Nkubulu is hung up on the outer walls of the dwelling, but the pot, on the other hand, is placed on a stone in a corner of the house.

When nkisi is composed they get hold of insects causing stinging and smarting sensations, such as the mbanza stinging grub, minsakala and other kinds of ants, wasps etc. These are all ground up with some leaves. Nkisi Mwe Nsundi causes stomach-ache and afflicts people with madungu and kibinda ruptures.

Ruptures, stomach-ache and rumbling colic are treated. The nganga strikes the sick person with the nkubulu-bag on the navel, the flanks and above the small of the back, saying: "Mbanza-grubs (in the sculpture, also a species of ant) there, minsakala there, those with sore noses, those with earache, the rupture rumbles, but in madungu-rupture it has not taken up its abode. Make him not distended, not as narrow as an eel, not swollen like the baobab-tree!"

Then the nganga takes a grain of corn and gives it to the sick person, after which he grinds a medicine from various plants such as nsonya-grass, bolongo, dimbuzu, leaves of lubota and of nsafu, as well as lemba-lemba and musooso etc.

The sick man drinks the medicine in palm wine that has stood over-night. A little ash and salt are strewed on the medicine. The person being treated with the medicine may not eat manioc that has been pulled up that day together with others, nor may he eat fresh peanuts, or pour out palm wine that has stood over-night for others. He is also forbidden to eat nsafu with laymen.

If anyone should throw a stone hard on the ground, "lift up your rear, otherwise a rupture will result!"

Mister Nsundi, Father Madungu, is not invoked and summoned through nloko. He is composed only by men.

He is often used as a means of protection against thieves, and is in this case hung up on

the door to dwellings and other houses. Anyone trying to enter will get a rupture as big as the stone that has been put in nkisi.

Mpanzu was formerly the nkisi of the Mpanzu luvila, but was subsequently developed in the form of several variants. Among these may be noted Mpanzu Mbombo, Mpanzu or Nduda in the Mayombe tracts and Kimpanzu.

Mpanzu Mbombo derives its name from a certain MPANZU whose whole nose became sore. He dreamed of three shells tied up in a kuta-bundle. They were lying on an outcropping of rock at the water's edge, and therefore belong to the water species. MPANZU caught sight of them and made a nkutu-bag to carry them in. They then composed a nkisi from them. In the one shell there was chalk, in the second yellow ochre, and in the third clay from a termite-stack.

This nkisi is kept behind the house.

When it is being composed they draw mamoni-lines and sing: "Draw crosses (makulunsi), tell Nzambi that he is to draw them!" The medicine comprises charcoal from the forge of a smithy, lusaku-saku, nsafu-fruit that has not fallen, the nest of the nsombe-grub and the head of the latter. When a person is being treated the nganga sings: "Treat for me a sick child, a treatment of the nose. Loosen, Mpanzu, open, Mpanzu, treat inwardly! I shall treat outwardly. In the sun, in the moon, take good care of, care for, Mpanzu!" The nganga softens the charcoal in the shells with strong palm wine and then draws lines on the patient at the corners of the eyes, on the brow, at the point of the shoulder-blades, on the flanks and on the legs and feet. The nganga: "May the pains disappear in the direction of the setting sun!" He then places the shells on the body and sings: "Loosen, Mpanzu! Open, Mpanzu! Mpanzu e!"

The patient may not eat nsafu-fruit that has been left over, the head of the nsombe-grub or anything that is single (odd). There must be two and two or four. He may not sit where they are roasting fresh manioc, palm-nuts or peanuts without first drawing with charcoal on his brow and belly.

If the medical heart falls off the shells, nkisi becomes unclean. The nganga must in this case come and place another one there, the same ceremonies being performed as on the first occasion.

This nkisi may also be composed by women. There are as a rule many novices. They must receive their nkisi from the hand of ngudi a nganga. The same prohibitions apply for the nganga as for the patient, as does also the rule that he may not buy his exemption from them with



Fig. 24. Spear used in the Mbenza-cult (Mbenza Navunda), Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 460).



palm wine. He may not treat people on nkooyi and buduka days, but only on konzo and mpika days.

The patient is also treated at a cross-roads, when the nganga pours palm wine into a little pit, stirs up the earth and strews medicine in it. This is then smeared on the patient's body. After this the nganga slaps five bimpanzingila (i.e. slaps a leaf in the hand in such a way that it snaps, cf. LDFK, p. 986, to'-to'-to). This is done three times, nato-to-to. He now twists a munkwiza-stem and besprinkles the sick person, who shoots up his hands before the face of the nganga. The sick man is also massaged with a banana-stem, after which the nganga lifts him up with his little finger, saying: "Lubu, lubu, kuna nseke, teela!" — i.e. the treatment is finished.

In many cases Mpanzu consists of only two shells, a male one containing chalk and a female one with ndimba-red. The snails living in the shells were formerly very much feared, as it was thought that they caused sores on the nose and limbs. The composition is not accompanied with the beating of drums, but with singing.

This Mpanzu causes sores and rough skin, ring-worm, headache and in women, pains in the back. These shells contain no actual medicine — the patient drinks straight from the one or the other shell and makes smears on his body. The chalk is then poured from the male shell onto the sore.

The patient may not eat roasted maize, pepper, salt or nsombe-grubs until the nganga comes and gives them to him. The popular belief is that the sores will otherwise become bigger and worse.

These shells may also be used to visit vengeance on thieves. If someone has stolen manioc, a piece of the root is put in the shell, whereupon the thief is afflicted with sores. If a pig has eaten manioc, maize, peanuts, and the owner of the pig is not prepared to pay for the damage, some of the crop that has been eaten is likewise put into the shell, so that the owner of the pig gets nasty sores.

A woman may not touch a male shell, for this would imply its desecration. The medicine that is cut up comprises, inter alia, nkandikila, tondo, nkiduku, nsaku-nsaku, nsamba-pepper etc.

In other places Mpanzu consists of a nkisi kinkungu-basket. It is composed in a place where a great and powerful chief has been buried. The novices will then be bound by the dead.

There are two signs showing whether Mpanzu can free the sick person. The latter may not see anyone on the road, and he may not see a snake in the woods. When he returns, he sees the dead on the graves, where they are to attach the medical heart.

Mpanzu or Nduda is a nkisi of common occurrence in Mayombe. It is used to counteract the mischief perpetrated by bandoki. The family is also referred to as Dungu, and is said to derive from Kindamba.

Nduda is recognized by the small sculptures. The medicine bag is a nzamba knitted bag in which one finds ordinary medicine as well as looko-fungus, the head of a green snake, madyadya-grass whose stalks have been loaded with gunpowder etc., to shoot bandoki that may come within shooting distance, and a little futu-bag.

Nduda is placed high up in the house or out of doors so that bandoki may be seen and shot at.

Gunpowder is ignited in connection with the composition. The natives take a knife and flourish it towards nkuyu, after which they thrust it in the earth and sing: "Koko (the grasshopper) neti mpangi andi, banatene!" (a proverb: The grasshopper carries his brother, they carry each other).

It is not permitted to take fire or let fire blaze up in the house.

The consecration of Nduda consists in sacrificing a goat or a hen and letting the blood drip onto nkisi.

Nduda shoots bandoki that come to snare the nganga or his wives or children, as well as all those who come to put a spell upon a home.

Medicine and a hen are used for the treatment. The nganga's helpers wade into the water and knife the hen so that the blood flows over nkisi. The helpers then whip ngudi a nganga with switches, after which they repair to the village to slaughter and eat the hen.

The nganga may be a man or a woman, bearing the names LUBWILU or LUSOBO.

Nduda is consecrated and handed over to the novices by ngudi a nganga, who in this connection sacrifices a goat and lets the blood drip onto nkisi.

The nganga may not eat pork, nsombe-grubs, minkanga-potatoes, mkumbi-wood or the kinkombo-plant. If the nganga becomes unclean, ngudi a nganga must take nkisi to the stone and refill it with medicines.

Kimpanzu is used for the treatment of pains in the chest. Besides the ordinary ingredients the medicine-bag contains nine lots of three of the sharp shoots of nsonya-grass (having in view stitch and pricking pains in the chest), the heads of several of the most venomous snakes and roots of dyadya-grass. To the medicine is added nkula-red, and the whole is tied up in nkanka-squirrel skin and bound with cotton thread. A cock is sacrificed on the occasion of nkisi's consecration.

The nganga may not break off a palm-rib that has belonged to the house, nor may he play on the diti-instrument with shoots of a palm-branch, or scrape the wall of the house with a knife, or drink palm wine that has stood over-night, or break off a roasted banana or scrape it. When leaving the house in the morning he must consecrate himself by drawing with ash on his brow and on his ears and by strewing ash outside the house. He should bathe in the dew on either side of the road and then set off on a ramble.

Musansi bitutu is also called Mpuka (epilepsy) when it is used for the treatment of epilepsy. It is also used for children and for their upbringing etc. Another name by which it is known is Muzinga or Nyambi. It belongs to the family of water minkisi and was found in the water either after an indication in a dream or when someone went down to the water and quite unexpectedly found foam that whirled round and then the whole nkisi, a nkuta-basket with salu bag of raffia-cloth etc. It was tied with a string, and the finder took it up to the village, where it became nkisi for epilepsy. Together with the salu bag a small tutu-calabash with various medicines was put into the basket. The salu bag contained, inter alia, crab's claw, pieces of European mugs, blood of the bwonga (a little tortoise), Calabar-beans and

scales from the pangolin from which medicine was to be cut. In the bag were also to be found ordinary nkisi-medicine and chalk. In the tutu-calabash there were chalk, tondo, kola-nut, nsaku-nsaku and luyala.

As for most nkisi, a lusaba-shed is used for the composition. While composing nkisi the novices may not touch anything in the house until ngudi a nganga has defiled it. Nkisi is hung up behind the house with a cord that has been knotted to form a loop.

Ordinary nkisi-medicine is first used for treatment, and after this a crab's claw on which a medical heart is fastened with gum. A cord of twisted raffia-bast is attached to the medicine so that it may be worn as an amulet round the neck.

When treating a patient the nganga says: "Oh, go and wake his heart! Oh go and put froth on him, make his heart fear!" Then the stirred medicine is poured on the ground and mixed with water, so that the nganga can take some on his finger and smear it on the patient's chest, saying: "Naho, nahozi, treat inwardly, I shall treat outwardly. Let him not dream of mbungu mputu-beetles!"

The person thus treated may not eat the mbende or ntumbi rats, and yuuma that froths and boils over. He may not eat nyonsi-fish, goat's flesh or nkabi-antelope together with others, nor may he hand mugs with palm wine.

If the nganga dies, nkisi is desecrated, in which case it may be laid in a rapids.

This nkisi causes infants to fall ill of a fever etc. The medicine consists of all kinds of leaves growing on dry land. Water is poured over them and the child is made to smell the leaves while the nganga says: "He smells you, but you do not smell him. Do not make him as thin (narrow) as an eel. Make him as soft as the mpasi-cricket and as the nzenze-cricket."

The parents may not hug the child, which will only cause it to shiver in the night. They may not bathe the child on a forbidden day; nor, on such a day, may they allow people to come and fetch wood in the house. In infancy the child may not eat ripe pisang or ripe pineapple.

When the nganga has had coitus with his wife in the night he may not touch nkisi, nor may he treat anyone with it.

A Musansi is called Musansi a biteki (sculpture). There are ten small sculptures which are used as amulets worn by children and others. The kunda-rattle has two nditi braids with neck, as well as two or three clappers.

Musansi's whisk is used for treatment. Powder is taken from the medicine of the whisk and given to the sick person to smell three times. The nganga then draws crosses on the brow, at the corners of the eyes, on the small of the back, the arms and legs. This is done when treating fever, headache and oppressed sensations in the chest.

Malwangu is a very old nkisi, and was probably to begin with the protective nkisi of the Malwangu chief. It has several variants with different compositions and appearances, with and without sculptures. In most cases it consists of a very large bag, but sometimes also of a large calabash with its sculptures, which are filled with chalk and yellow ochre as well as medicine. At the side are suspended kunda-rattles with which nkisi is invoked in the

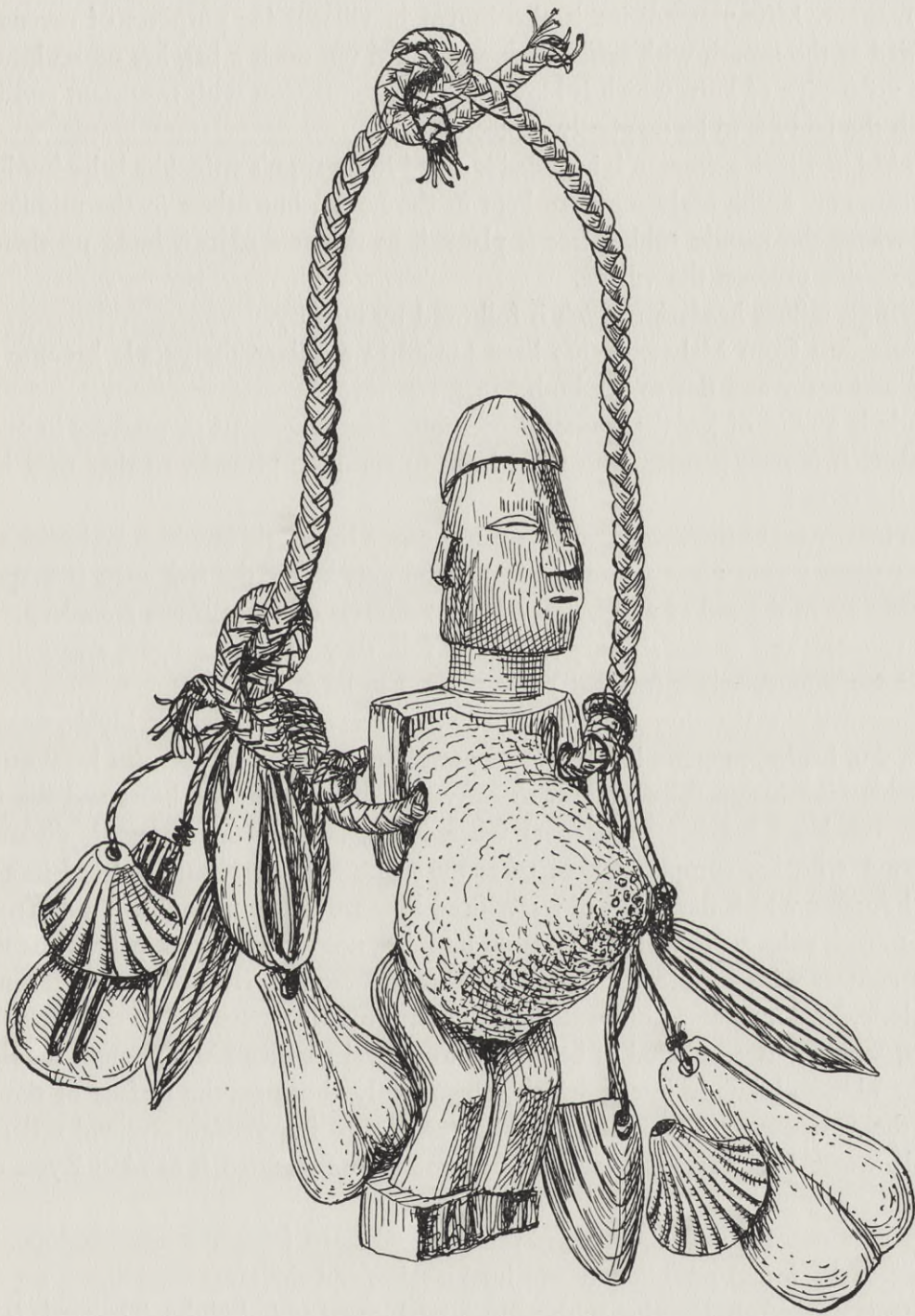


Fig. 25. A nkisi, Sundi in Lolo (Laman 552).

nloko manner. Mfunya-medicine is also buried in villages for purposes of revenge. The bag is tied at the mouth with raffia cloth and rolled up. Such a bag has no sculpture, but it has a nsiba-pipe of horn which is blown both in connection with treatment and in cases in which the body is to be magically protected.

The nkisi in which a woman is included is called Malwangu's wife. She helps her husband with treatment. Some Malwangu are kept in the house, but others in the middle of the village where the nsanda rubber tree is planted. In this case nkisi is hung up there. This mbyazi-master protects the village.

Malwangu inflicts headache which is followed by insanity.

If mfusa-dust from Malwangu has been buried in a village the people become feeble-minded and crazy and flee to the bush.

Nsonde is a nkisi of joy that causes depression, discouragement or madness in one form or another. It is such persons who must learn to compose Nsonde, so that they become well in the sequel.

In the first phase of the treatment the nganga digs a little hole in which he buries a medicine, the nsanga vulu plant (=munkwiza). If he gets better the sick man is besprinkled with medicine in the still of night, when he and the rest of the villagers are asleep.

If he recovers and speaks sensibly like other folk they send for a nganga to get him to compose Nsonde. A helper (mayaala) is appointed to be at his side.

The first medicine that the nganga cuts up on the stone consists of chalk, luyala, nkandikila, nsaku-nsaku, luzibu, ngongo, lufulangi and pumpkin seeds. It also contains luyangu-yangu and tumbangu-mbangu. The latter is to convert (bangumuna) the heart and the former to make the heart eager (yangumuna) when it has become faint-hearted, discouraged. The person who has composed nkisi takes the name MAKAI. Nkisi is placed in a basket with a lid, after which the blood of a sacrificed he-goat is dripped on it. Nsonde's nganga may not drink palm wine without a cap on his head, nor may he drink palm wine that has been in contact with a knife. He is not permitted to eat left-overs of nsafu. He must not travel alone, but must be accompanied on journeys by his adviser.

Zyeta, vertigo, is accounted as belonging to the celestial bankisi, although it originates from the nkenge lukundu insect, which spins rapidly about on the surface of the water. When the first man to compose this nkisi as a cure for vertigo saw and reflected on this little water insect and the way it span round, he adopted it as nkisi Zyeta to cure the sick.

Zyeta consists of a nsakala-rattle, nkutu-bag and horn from the nsia-antelope. In the rattle are to be found ndimba-red and lusaku-saku, and the same ingredients are among the contents of the bag, together with pepper, coal, copal and nkiduku. The rattle is placed at the door, while the salu bag and the food bag are carried by the nganga.

When a part of the composing procedure has taken place in the village they go to the water to take one of these water insects and the banganga tell how the sick person is to be treated and rain prevented.

Nkisi is consecrated by the expedient of igniting gunpowder over it. It is able to cure

people suffering from vertigo and to prevent rain. The leaves used for treating the sick are mumbangu-mbangu, wandanda nzila and dry leaves from the ndongila-banana plant.

The sick person is propped against the kunzi house-post. The nganga then takes medicine in his mouth and spits it on the forehead and ears of the sick man, after which his head is massaged with leaves, while the nganga says: "Ewo, ewo, may you treat him at the cross-roads, may you treat him at the hearth, may you treat him at sunrise".

The subject of the treatment may not look at people or anything else that rotates, nor may he spin a top or the like. He is likewise forbidden to look down into water. He may not eat fresh manioc or fresh peanuts with others.

Afterwards the nganga must prepare a parcel containing feathers from the nkuka-bird, a fresh palm nut, a little strip of red cloth, and the whole must be tied up with string and placed on the head, while the nganga says: "You must not crouch down (yinama) at the door where Zyeta is, otherwise you will fall ill again".

The bundle must not be wetted with water, or it will lose its power.

Zyeta may not be composed by a woman.

The nganga must not let nkisi be wetted with water, and he may not eat fresh manioc or fresh peanuts with others.

If the nganga does not want it to rain, he takes mumbangu-mbangu and a broom and blows the mbambi-horn, saying: "Become light, become clear".

Nkutu a Zyeta is put into a nkutu-bag of cotton which is provided with a handle, so that the nganga can carry it. It belongs to the same family as Nsakulu and has the same properties as Nsakulu. Into the nsiba-pipe are stuffed gunpowder, small nsadi-stones and wadding as a protection for the nganga against attack by bandoki. If they should attempt to attack him they would be shot by the loaded nsiba-horn.

Mayimbi is everywhere considered to be a great nkisi belonging to the bankosi family (the smashers). In certain tracts it consists chiefly of two large sculptures, man and wife, with small children (=little sculptures). They are fashioned like human beings. For treatment all are taken along. If a child is not flourishing but ill, being eaten by bandoki and so on, it is given a little Mayimbi-child as an amulet to wear round the neck or on the chest.

If a village is ravaged by an epidemic, also Mayimbi and his children are besprinkled. Perhaps the mfunya-knot has been tied fast for them on Mayimbi, when all the banganga come and set up little sculptures on the village street. If it is a severe epidemic, it has been caused by the male Mayimbi, and otherwise by the female Mayimbi. If a female nkisi is thought to have brought about the sickness she must be besprinkled with medicine consisting of lemba-lamba and munsabi-nsabi and the sculpture must be left in the street overnight. A hen is sacrificed early in the morning, after which the entire village is to be besprinkled.

If it is a male Mayimbi that has attacked the village he comes with power, smashes down trees and palms etc., and the ailments of the people are generally manifested in the chest. The nganga is summoned and brings the male sculpture with him. Arrived at the burial-

place he blows his pipe and pronounces his nsibu-invocations. The sculpture is set up outside the village. The nganga cuts up medicine in the evening. It is placed on the road leading to the village and left over-night. In the morning he flings a knife into the ground and requests a cock as a sacrifice. The nganga then tells those for whose sakes the mfunya-knot has been tied fast to come and look for their bundle, whether these are of hair, a piece of cloth or what not. While the search is going on people stand on guard with their knives in their hands. When the bundles have been taken away they disperse and plunder the village. If anyone has seen a bunch of bananas he cuts it down. Whatever he claps his eyes upon he is at liberty to take. Then all is collected before ngudi a nganga and he distributes it among those who have collected it, i.e. the novices. If anyone really needs any particular item from the collected material he must redeem it.

After this the medicine is taken and the village is besprinkled, so that Mayimbi shall not soon come again. A pregnant woman who is treated gets a Mayimbi-child, and when the baby is born it must be named after this nkisi. A boy gets a little male sculpture hung round his neck and a girl a female sculpture. If it is a sister's child the sculpture is hung round its neck by a sister's child. They also take sister's children of Mayimbi and hang them round the necks of two children born of the same mother. Thus Mayimbi's child sculptures are made to agree with the conditions among human beings.

This nkisi is composed by a male nganga, the process taking three or four months. The composition does not take place in the middle of the village, but in the outskirts. If it is done during the rainy season the natives are very much afraid, for this attracts the thunder. They sing: "E, Mayimbi, attack, attack! E, Mayimbi, kill dog, attack, attack". This is also sung during the treatment of one suffering from pains in the chest and feeling as if his ribs were being crushed.

Such a patient is considered to have been seized by bandoki and he is treated by the nganga in the following way. A pot is put on the fire on four wooden pegs driven into the ground. No wood may be placed under the pot, but only stalks of madyadya-grass. The women stand there in one row and the men in another. By way of medicine a Calabar bean is put into the pot. When the latter boils over the side over which it first overflows indicates that one of those standing at that side is a ndoki.

Two banganga now go to the village cross-roads and draw a cross. Into this water is poured, and one of the banganga stands astride it with his loin-cloth tucked up between his legs and stirs the water with a leafy branch of a tree. He then besprinkles the sick man with it to the accompaniment of the song: "Ci, lembe-lembe-lembe". They then begin to draw lines on the patient from the shoulders to the wrists, from the hips to the ankles and on the brow.

In other districts Mayimbi is a little nkisi in a shell which gives good luck. But it may also cause epilepsy. All who are afflicted with this disease must compose nkisi Mayimbi. The composition goes forward without dancing and beating on the drum, but to the accompaniment of singing. When chalk etc. is being pounded they sing, for instance: "Leaning against the door. E, nganga, leaning against the door". Or: "The moon has

risen!" The shell nkisi is then prepared. Into it they stuff, inter alia, chalk and charred coal. The nganga must be wearing a ring as a sign of Mayimbi's nganga-dignity.

The shell is used in the treatment of epilepsy, the procedure being as follows. The nganga pours munkwiza juice into the shell and gives it to the patient to drink. He is then beaten with the mansusu-plant, which he must also smell.

The patient may not look in a mirror, must not see a pot boil over or sit on a burning brand.

Kinkita (deception), Kipeeka (who robs), Ngo Mfumu (the master) are minkisi with the same character. Kinkita is deceptive, attacks anywhere at all and does not remain in the place where it has attacked. Its force is that of the storm, which shakes much grass. It has no desire for friendship and attacks nganga and layman alike, whence the name.

Kipeeka is so named because it will not keep calm, but attacks and ravages very frequently.

Ngo Mfumu (one of the salu bags) is master in the house that has been erected for him. Ngo Mfumu is not carried about indiscriminately, but sits quietly in his house on a little shelf.

The salu bag contains a nsindu-stone, coarse gravel, peanuts, maize, hooks, mfulangi, nsaku-nsaku, a lot of chalk and many small futu-bags.

A corn-cob is included in the salu bag. It is considered to be Kinkita's mukuyu-spirit. The little futu-bags, the whisk with skin of the nkankasquirrel and mikubulu are hung up in the interior of the house.

When the novices have composed nkisi they go to nse-kenda (the place where the composing of nkisi is completed) to learn the prohibitions from ngudi a nganga and in order to become acquainted with the medicinal herbs and the treatment for every sickness. If the novices want to learn still more they must buy palm wine for ngudi a nganga so that he may divulge to them what he knows.

The novice may not tell anyone what he has seen and experienced at nse-kenda.

When the nganga comes to treat a sick person he must first shred medicinal leaves and lemba-lamba to alleviate the pains of the sufferer. He then opens up the salu bag and scrapes off a little from each of the medicinal objects. He then takes the lubongo-cloth and shakes it over the sick man's face. The nganga now places his hand on the crown of the patient's head, strikes him three times with lubongo and makes him smell thrice. As the patient is sniffing the nganga says: "Smell, smell! He smells, but you must



Fig. 26. Nkisi and toy (?), Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 1396).



not smell him". He must also strike the patient's body at the joints of the limbs with lubongo, reiterating: "Do not tear the limbs loose, so that you kill nganga!"

The nganga then makes a medicine from the little bag. The bigger bag, Ngo Mfumu, is as a rule left at home, but the small salu bag is always taken along by the nganga. If the patient does not get better he has to be treated with medicine from the salu bag.

Apart from Kinkita's ability to cause pressures in the body, pains in the joints etc., he also prevents a wife from becoming pregnant. She is then blessed by the nganga. She rests her legs on a lubongo-cloth while ngudi a nganga and a father of twins draw mamoni-lines about her navel as well as other lines round her wrists, from the corners of her eyes to her ears and on her flanks, to bless the childbed. When they have finished drawing the lines they spit on her stomach and back. It is forbidden to drink palm wine on the day on which the treatment has been given. The nganga himself may not drink palm wine until he has completed the treatment.

In the house in which Ngo Mfumu is kept no-one may place guns barrel upwards, they must be stood with the muzzles towards the ground.

If Kinkita's nganga dies, nkisi is rendered impure, but it may, however, be cleansed and sanctified by the others.

Mbwanga, deriving from bwanga, to ache, is the nkisi of a little mountain stream that cures headache etc. It is composed without dancing or beating on the drum. A flat stone is laid on a ring of nsonya-grass and a ring is drawn on the stone with chalk. With this simple ceremony the stone is consecrated. Medicine is prepared, as a rule to the accompaniment of the song: "E, Mbwanga, yaaya Mbwanga. Mbwanga, break the head! E, Mbwanga".

Mbwanga consists of a little bag in which are kept medicines, e.g. lusaku-saku, nzo-pepper, luyala, kola-nuts, mumbangu-mbangu, mundanda-nzila, nkandikila, cocoon of the praying mantis, tonda, gunpowder and ndimba-seeds etc. All these ingredients are pulverized by a woman. During the composition the nganga sings: "E, yaa Malanda! E, maa Mbwanga".

Mbwanga cures headaches, pains in the small of the back or in the hips and limbs. According to the prohibitions and instructions anything that pops and creaks must be avoided (e.g. roasting maize, which pops and snaps in the pot), the finger-joints must not be pulled or made to snap. Similarly, palm nuts and potatoes must not be roasted, for just as these may burst their skins, so, too, may the body burst. Care must be taken not to strike one's head against the door-post or to catch hold of this; nor may a mboba-basket on the ground be grasped to be put on the head. Mbwanga may be used to prevent rain in the same way as other minkisi.

Mabyala, also referred to as Mayina, Kimpembe and Solo, belongs to the Mbwanga family. In the futu-bag are to be found the tails of the ngondo-monkey, mbulu (jackal), and all sorts of other animals, tail feathers from hens, nkanko-birds and parrots. Other items are pieces of the loin-cloth of one who has died from nkasa-poisoning as well as fingers from the corpse of such a person. Medicine and a lusolo-bead are placed in the futu-bag. Another of these beads has been swallowed by the nganga. It cannot be excreted, but remains in

the nganga's body so that through the bead he can call those who are to fetch him. If he calls with gladness for a whole day, people come on another day and fetch him.

These minkisi afflict their victims with illnesses, and they are composed so that the composer may become acquainted with the sick and bandoki, and the places where the latter eat their victims.

The medicine is enclosed in the heart of the sculpture. The whole procedure is concluded under a large dark cloth. The nganga's helpers and wives creep under this and slay a cock for Mbwanga. The down from the neck is put on the resin (the heart) and Mabyala. Hairs from the nganga and his wives are to be stuck fast to the sculptures, to show that they have full participation in nkisi.

When they have affixed the heart to the sculptures they dig a pit in the road leading out of the village and call this zongo or yowa. Here they scrape off portions of the same medicine as is in the "heart" and stuff these into a futu-bag on the village road. They then sacrifice a cock and eat sele-bananas. Those who have composed nkisi are to eat the cock's heart, which must be devoured raw.

In the prohibitions it is laid down that maneena-pumpkin seeds must not be shelled in the house, yimba-bananas, nsafu, nzonzi-fish and tiba-bananas must not be eaten in the presence of an uninitiated person. No unauthorized person may enter the house, which has been sanctified. These nkisi laws are intended for the preservation of the nganga and the wives.

Kindyodyo (from ndyodyo, sharp-pointed) is said to prick holes in foetuses so that they perish, or in the bladder, so that blood is vented, or in the side, giving rise to sterility.

Apart from ordinary medicine, the heads of the most venomous serpents or a portion thereof and, above all, sharp-pointed nsonga-grass etc. are used. Mbwanga-amulets are made of goat's horn, nkula-red and medicine. The novice also cuts fresh stalks of grass and a portion of a goat's penis. Both are set upright in Mbwanga. The stalk of grass is sniffed and the penis licked. One draws on all limbs with the blade of grass and one shakes one's girdle when one has finished.

Into the goat's horn are stuffed medicine and nine triple stalks of the sharp nsonya-grass, heads of venomous snakes and a goat's penis. The goat-horn is called the man. A cock is sacrificed. This is then roasted and eaten by the banganga.

The person to be treated must drink nkisi-medicines, lick the penis, shake his girdle, slap his knees and snap his fingers, saying: "Fu be-e-e!" (imitation of a goat's bleat). The penis is licked three times, each time with the same shaking of the girdle and the bleat: "Fu be-e-e".

If the patient's condition is alleviated the nganga at once boils divers leaves and gives him some of the concoction to drink, at the same time draping him with lumbadi-mbadi creeper. After the lapse of three days the nganga returns to spit on (bless) the patient with leaves from the mbota-tree.

The person treated may not speak with a menstruating woman, nor may he touch her or go into the house.

Kindyodyo not only destroys foetuses, but also gives foetuses, as well as good strong loins for child-bearing.

There are many prohibitions. The nganga must not look at manioc that has been pulled up the same day, nor may he eat a cock together with others, or a manioc root in which a blade of nsonya-grass is growing. When he drinks palm wine he must shake his girdle. He may not enter a hut for menstruating women. He is permitted to "buy" a number of forbidden things and he can then eat without danger, but not e.g. kola-nuts, beans or nsangi-fish. Smaller prohibited items are bought for a trifle, but the bigger items cost a bundle of cloth or 25 francs.

If Kindyodyo is used as protection for nsafu, palm or manioc the nganga takes three blades of grass, blesses them and hangs them up on a small bush or sticks them away e.g. at the foot of a nsafu-tree.

The natives also protect their marital beds by taking chalk, nkandikila and luzibu and blessing nkisi at the crossroads of the village, saying: "Eh, you man up above (northwards), you man down below (to the south), who is to come and sleep with my wife! Eh, say, do you hear Kindyodyo, drive him away. And whatever I say to you, be for me as sharp as a knife and burning as a fire! If he sits on the bed, grasp him by the chest". He then takes loose gunpowder and ignites it over the corner of the bed's head where the mbwanga-bag is placed. He then hangs up nkisi on the bedpost and draws with chalk. The whole house can be protected in the same way.

If the person treated does not obey the laws he gets blood in his urine and pains in the loins.

Kinswiti (that stills lust) derives from the goat and the porcupine, which outshine other beasts in their lust for copulation. If a man is beset with the same desire he should compose Kinswiti to be quit of it.

Kinswiti consists of a salu bag containing nsonya-grass, penises of a goat and a porcupine and leaves etc. of ordinary nkisi-medicine. It is hung on the wall on a palm-rib peg.

One of the songs sung during the composition is the following: "Eh, goatish man I shall give, koko-dyo ko-e (a crowning)". Then they give a turn to the corners of the loin-cloth and imitate the goat: "Fu be-e. E-e-e, fu bee-e-e". Gunpowder is then ignited round nkisi to the accompaniment of nlolo-cries: "Ta wulu-wulu-wulu!" The consecration ceremony is then finished.

Kinswiti excites the man and his penis to lust, and stupefies animals, so that they are easily caught in snares. Nkisi loses its power if it is not given palm wine.

Kinswiti is not used for the treatment of sick persons, but is composed by one who feels a too overpowering sensual desire. When it is time for bed he must stick a knife in the ground at the foot of the bed and a needle at the head. He must then drink palm wine over the knife and the needle. If he does not do this he is unable to leave his wife in peace during the night.

When he makes the round of his traps he must let those at the upper and lower end of the lukaku-fence snap to and cry milolo. If he does not do so he will get no animals.



Fig. 27. *Nkisi Nkondi, Sundi in Mukimbungu (Laman 537).*

Mutinu mamba derives from a stretch of water, Makuku. A woman who was suffering from severe abdominal pains thought of going for a bathe here to get relief. When she reached the water she saw three very large stones lying in a circle. Calabar beans were spinning round in the middle. To her astonishment a salu bag now came up and danced. She immediately clapped her hands kya-kya to show her reverence.

She then picked up the salu bag with both hands to carry it to the village. But she was seized with spasms which lasted until she reached the village. The villagers asked: "Is it not MBUZI NSEMI?" She knew only whence it had come. A man now came forward and pressed her shoulders and tapped her forehead, whereupon she calmed down and was able to tell how and where she had got this nkisi. The people then gave it the name Mutinu mamba.

Mutinu consists of a salu bag which is kept in a handsome mukuta-basket covered with a piece of raffia-cloth.

During the composition the nganga says: "The late MBUZI NSEMI has given me bumpati-magic. She has given me bunganga-magic (kudi kudi Mutinu mpati, kudi Mutinu bunganga)". The song runs as follows: "E, get up, let us go, Mrs. Mutinu mamba! Get up, let us go, Mrs. Mutinu mamba".

Mutinu may be composed by both women and men, for it was a woman who saw it and took it to the village. But it was a man who averted the ecstasy and calmed her down.

Apart from ordinary medicine the salu bag contains cocoon of the praying mantis, kinkoki-hook, geometrid moth and female luzolo-bead, stones from water (these are bakisi that have been taken in the state of ecstasy), tooth of the guinea-rat and the fwa nkabu-insect etc.

Mutinu is used to make women pregnant and for catching game in snares.

When treating diarrhoea and stomach-ache the nganga strikes the patient's body gently here and there with the salu bag; he then cuts up some midyaka-medicine to prepare a drink. When the nganga arrives with his nkisi he must first perforate leaves over the hand three times to awaken him and read: "Deceased Mutinu ku bakento, deceased Mutinu ku babakala, loose the man, let the man go, wander around the rubber tree". Then he unlooses the nkisi-string and takes dust to dust the patient with, dusting up the arms and down over the trunk and belly, saying: "Deceased Mutinu ku bukento" and so on. He then thrusts his hand into the salu bag and takes the powder, which sticks to arms and body and repeats the same rigmarole.

The nganga then takes stones from water and crooked items from the salu bag and begins to treat the patient by placing them on his head and saying: "Make not that he feels as it were a nkonko-drum in his head, make not that there is as it were the blast of a mpungi-trumpet in his ears, make not that his eyes look up and look down like the lizard's eyes, make not his eyes rheumy, make not the sinew at the nape of the neck stiff, make not his shoulder loose, make not his limbs spindly, he must carry you, you are not to carry him, make not that he feels a weight on his back, but that this be light, let not his thigh-bones go out of joint, close not up his sides at the ribs, make not his heart weak, make him not

to pant, but to breathe quietly. I your mpati, I your nganga — you treat inwardly, I treat outwardly, make no hole in his stomach-sac in the belly. The stomach-sac is where he has the sensation of hunger, make not his belly to ache, let him not get windy colic, let not his hip get out of joint, put not cramps into his legs, make not his knees go apart, scrape not his calves, let his ankles not creak”.

The nganga now claps his hands with kunku-clapping, he stretches them skywards to send away the disease and says: “Thither where the sun has gone, to that place may your pains go, go muna nzayi na nzayi (on land and land)”.

Midyaka is medicine from the salu bag which is drunk. It has been cut up together with pulverized chalk and salt. If the sufferer does not get better the nganga must take medicine under the water and return in ecstasy to give the patient lemba-lamba to drink. When the latter imbibes the mixture he folds his arms and then stretches them towards the nganga. When the nganga has placed the midyaka-mixture on a plate he at once proffers it, a portion in each hand, and renders thanks for it by clapping his hands. The sick person eats, and stretches out his hands three times to receive the midyaka-mixture.

If the patient does not get well the nganga goes on perforating leaves over his hand and drawing mamoni-lines on himself, singing the while: “Shame of the Kongo dweller, O mother!” Now he begins to be getting enough yasumuka-spasms; he gets up and dashes into the water in great haste to dive in and bring up leaves from the water, crumble lemba-lamba, put all together and cut up some medicine. After the addition of salt he makes the patient drink the medicine out of his hand.

The nganga may also carry palm wine to the foot of the musiki-tree, draw with chalk and yellow ochre and sing: “Shame of the Kongo dweller”. He then digs a little hole where he buries a little blue bead. He says: “We have come to buy that which one buys for nzumbu-beads. That is salt. Make me sharp as a knife, make me burning as a fire!” When he has poured palm wine and a little water into the hole he takes out the blue bead, saying: “I your mpati, I your nganga, make me sharp as a knife”. He must pull up a tree and cut it off at the root. Then he goes to the village to pound up the root, takes a mug and puts it on the fire. It must boil over three times, and he then strews earth on the leaf he has tied over the opening of the mug. The mug is now removed from the fire, which has died down, and the sick person is given the concoction to drink.

They must then look for leaves from the mubunzi-bunzi tree, nsende-nsende and palm branches to pound up for medicine. The nganga binds all with salt and places it on a plate, draws with chalk and yellow ochre on the plate and blesses it. He then cuts up lusaku-saku, luyala and luteete and spits them out onto the plate. Water is now poured onto the plate and the whole stirred up. The nganga lifts up the bonzo-mixture and pours it three times on the back and palm of his hand and gives the patient some to drink. The nganga now pricks the bonzo-points at mbula and the corners of the eyes, on the shoulders, the navel, the flanks and the legs.

Treatment with Mutinu takes place in courtyards and openly among the people.

To bless childbeds the nganga first strikes (tampika) the woman with the salu bag,

saying: "Bring with you the carrying bands of childbed and the carrying bands of child care. Make not the vertebra at the nape of her neck stiff, she is to carry you, you are not to carry her". They then cut up midyaka-medicine. When the woman has eaten some of this the nganga must ask for mpusu za makoodila and the band with which her fertility has been bound, and which is made of raffia cloth. The nganga ties the band, gets hold of some hen's down, cocoon of the praying mantis and kizika-zika to tie up together with three Calabar beans. All this is blessed by the nganga, while the woman is blessed by one who has given birth to twins. After this the nganga drapes the band on the woman and tells her the prohibitions. She must not crouch down near water on konzo and mpika days, must not see manioc freshly pulled that day; nor may she eat ntooba-stew or beans; she may not sleep together with her husband on konzo and mpika days, may not wear long hair or use mourning pomade; she must bathe and use ndimba-red. When she has become pregnant and given birth to a child Mutinu's nganga is sent for. He protects the house by taking leaves from the tops of palms, cutting them in two, binding them fast above the door and behind the house and adding divers leaves to them from which medicine is cut for nkisi. The nganga expounds the laws, which include the prohibition to take fire out of the house on konzo and mpika days unless the child has already died.

If the foetus shudders after the woman has become pregnant, Mutinu's nganga must cut up midyaka-medicine and prepare lemba-lamba medicine for her, so that the blood may settle in the womb.

For snares they cut medicine from the sambu-palm nut. This is placed in a dry leaf, after which they go to the snares and ignite it. The person setting the snares or traps then says: "Wilu", implying that the animals are to calm their fears and get caught in the snares.

Mayiza is a water nkisi that has been composed under water by one who has been elected by the simbi-spirits of the country. In certain tracts it is now composed under a large dark blue cloth.

The composition under water is done by those who lapse into ecstasy, for Mayiza is a nkisi of rapture. While one dives into the water to compose nkisi, those on shore beat the drum, sing, and dance. They sing: "Yobo, yobo, nkisi!" until the composition is finished and the one who has been under water emerges with his nkisi bundle and his tiba-sapling at his side. This nkisi treats the same ailments as Bamfumu, who has the same descent, i.e. swollen limbs and belly, headache etc. The medicine contains lemba-lamba, worm-wood, nsasa-leaves and mansusu-leaves, both male and female flowers.

In some tracts Mayiza is a very large oblong bundle. The composition takes several days. Apart from ordinary medicine one also finds hide from domestic pigs and buffaloes, head of the nsesi-antelope and ngola-fish, nsunda-plant, nteete-seed, stalks of nsonya-grass and claws from the mayimbi-bird. From all this medicine is cut up to cure the sick and to help those wishing to give birth to children.

Mayiza is composed to the accompaniment of the ndungu-drum and any songs at all. The medicine is cut under a blue cloth and is wrapped in raffia cloth which is tied up to make a big bag.

No poultry are sacrificed to Mayiza to seek bandoki, it only treats sick people, protects children who are taken away from home for the first time and helps those desiring children.

The sick person who is under treatment may not eat the flesh of the domestic pig, nor yimba-bananas or yams (*hippopotamus-potatoes*).

As regards childbed, the nganga scrapes off a medicine from mfilu and mwindu branches, from the lunama-nama plant and lemba-lemba. All this he binds to the branch of a young palm whose nuts have not as yet been eaten by anyone. The nganga gives the woman some of the concoction to drink, after which she must take the medicine home and drink it three times daily. After drinking she fixes the medicine to a peg and hangs it on the wall.

When she becomes pregnant she puts on a cord into which hen's down is twined and which has been smeared with nkula-red. The nganga blesses it and ties it about her waist. Before giving birth to her baby she may not let water be spilled on the cord. If she wants to bathe, she must first doff the cord. She may not soak manioc in water or take it out of water; nor may she eat it. If she is to be ferried over a watercourse or has to step over a column of migratory ants she must leave nkolumuna-leaves behind. If she goes out early in the morning she must first draw on her face with ash and then throw out a little ash.

When she has been delivered of her child it may not leave the house until the nganga leads it out and takes it all over the village. If the mother should forget this and take the child out, they must make a propitiatory gift to the nganga, who will thereupon treat it, spit on it and sanctify it with a name. The propitiatory gift must be worth five francs because the parents themselves have rendered the child impure.

The mother may not go too early to the market to show the child. She may not give it pork to eat, nor take manioc out of the water together with the child. She may not show a corpse to the child or go to the burial place with it. One who eats pork may not enter the home.

Mayiza treats also swellings and tenderness in different parts of the body, general debility and diarrhoea.

Makwende is a great nkisi and is also referred to as Bamfumu. The composition takes several days. The usual medicine is used, together with the heads of all venomous snakes.

The weapon of this nkisi is a kongi-bow (a loop) of rattan, a konki-pipe, a bag with red earth and medicine. A further accessory is Makwende's pot, which is placed on mpete-posts when medicine is to be boiled. It must boil over three times. In order to bring the medicine bag to life it is necessary that gunpowder shall be ignited on it when it is ready. An uncastrated pig is sacrificed and the blood poured on nkisi. The flesh is eaten. Nkisi is then blessed at a crossroads and at the threshold of the home. The nganga may not eat a hen that has not been sacrificed to nkisi, an animal caught by a leopard, a mouse caught by a cat or bloody flesh together with an uninitiated person.

Makwende cures pains in the chest and other ailments. Mfunya-bundles are stuffed into Makwende and maloki is buried in a village that has been plundered through the manipulations of swindlers.



The sick person is treated first with medicine and tuyangu-yangu leaves. If he gets better the nganga puts makongi-loops on him and massages him with nkisi. The patient may not eat yimba-bananas or yams, nor may he twist his neck. If he gets a pain in the sinews at the nape of the neck he must first spit on the medicine bag, which is made of papyrus, after which it is tied round his neck. If there is then an improvement the treatment is continued with massage.

Kubungu is so called because it consists in part of a bag with which the nganga strikes (kuba) the patient's body hard blows to take away tenderness if he has, for example, fallen from a tree. Kubungu is composed only by men.

Kubungu consists further of the feathers of a guinea-fowl (because it has quick legs), salu bag, a magic knot of grass and a whisk of mubulu-grass with which the nganga may seek bandoki to seize them. The guinea-fowl may be taken by the nganga as kinkonko animal.

The salu bag contains ordinary medicine and claws from the ngembo-bat, flint, and goat's horn.

If someone has fallen down from e.g. a palm he is given a medicine; but in addition to this his whole body is massaged with blows administered with mikubulu to reduce swellings caused by internal bleeding.

If someone has hurt himself, nsonya-grass is bound below the wound, after which ndimbadye is taken from the salu bag and strewn over the wound.

If a person has broken an arm or a leg, ntebele (water with palm wine poured into clay) is used to draw a cross on the ground and on the body; but the broken bone may also be put in splints.

Kidyata (massage with the foot, trample) is much used for massaging swellings if the belly is hard and aching, and also in connection with chest-pains.

At the composition they sing: "Kya, we have come to compose Kidyata for women, Kidyata for men. Say, have you become sharp? Are you overflowing? Be for us as sharp as a knife, as burning as fire!"

A considerable amount of ordinary medicine is prepared in which the following ingredients enter: pigs' excrement, a piece of the skin of a zibet-cat together with the same from a buffalo, an elephant and a leopard. The medicine is put into shells but there are also mikubulu-bags with medicine.

Apart from the curing of the sick and the restoration of appetite in older children, Kidyata is used as a preservative and to take away strength from some minkisis', e.g. Lumoni's, protective powers by administering nsoodya-fillips.

When treating a patient the nganga pours palm wine and water that has stood overnight into a shell. This he stirs up and gives to the sick person to drink, while he repeats: "Make him not swollen, not swelled up in the limbs and other parts". The patient drinks three times, after which palm wine is dripped onto his chest and belly to drive away the ailment. This is also effected if the patient's fingers are drawn downwards. When the sick man feels the desire to belch, he belches and spits on the ground, saying: "Let that which

is inside rot!" The ailment is now in process of disappearing. If he makes wind behind he says: "Break off!" He is then massaged with mikubulu bags.

If a child has lost its appetite it, too, is given medicine from the shell. If a woman is in labour but the child is not coming quickly enough, she must drink from Mahumbidu's or Mwandazi's shell, but never from Kidyata's.

If Lumoni's nganga has snapped his fingers magically over an object, it becomes a forbidden object. The nganga must then drink from Kidyata's shells, whereupon the prohibition is rescinded, and the same applies to other prohibitions, for Kidyata's power is greater.

If massage is to be given the nganga tramples the sick person three times on each side. This is not done secretly, as with Lumoni, but outside the house, on the rubbish-heap or where the villagers urinate.

Nkomina is the name of a nkisi that wants to suppress sores that are breaking out on the body and under the feet. It belongs to the land family.

Nkisi Nkomina appears when the nkudu-disease breaks out all over the body. He consists of salu bag containing ash, lemon-pips, some slag from a smithy and flakes of soot from a roof. He is kept in the hen-house.

When Nkomina is composed they take a plate upon which the medicine is mixed by hand. The salu bag also contains lwanga-frogs, pigs' excrement and hens' droppings, the dimbuzi-herb and lemba-lamba etc. During the preparation they say: "Plenty among women and men, do not cause red sores and sores that spread. Do not cause cracks of mukolo londa". Then through nzimbu-children (children whose mothers are slaves) that their parents have given birth to for them the novices ask whether nkisi is complete.

Then the nganga shakes his body and strikes the plate with a mansusu-herb. Only one song is sung: "E, Nkomina, maama, yaaya. E, make me you child strong in Nkomina's life, kyamadyata!" They then collect palm nuts and consecrate what has been composed in the plate, afterwards pouring it over the novices.

Nkomina is able to prevent nkudu-sores from breaking out. The medicine is pounded up in large quantities, and the entire body is washed with it. The following injunction is laid down in the law: "be not afraid of nkudu-sores, but be together and close to one another and have no fear — then will Nkomina help you".

Kimbula is a nkisi with a sculpture the size of a small child. It has a hump on its back. Many medicine bags belong to this nkisi. These are not made of raffia cloth, but from the skins of ordinary squirrels and mbulu-squirrels.

If anyone gets pains in the back or the small of the back this means that Kimbula has seized him. The sufferer is treated with medicine from nkisi. The medicine is mixed in kula-red dye in a pot. Incisions are first made in the patient's back in the place where a hump seems to be forming, and the medicine is smeared on. The nganga then takes a stick with which to massage him and says: "Koodila, koodila, koodila (let go, let it loosen), take away the child Mr. Nganga, take it away Mr. Squirrel". The nganga then taps the body of the sick person, repeating: "Koodila, koodila, koodila, take away the child, Mr. Nganga, take it away Mr. Squirrel".

Fuka ntima is a nkisi in a pot in which are to be found chalk and crumbled medicine, mbanza-grubs, minsakala, mfingu and nzulu ants. The ailments treated are heart trouble, nausea and belly-ache.

The patient must hold day-old palm wine and water in his hand, stir them together and drink up the mixture with the medicine. A banana-shoot is then blessed, and a bite taken and spat out on the heart.

Dia bilezi is a very great nkisi that has one sculpture. Many possessions are required for its composition, and accordingly only wealthy persons can make it. Three lots of nine hens are killed and thrown on the rubbish heap. Laymen may eat them, but not banganga. Three he-goats are also killed and thrown away. Great quantities of palm wine are consumed. Songs are sung while the medicine is being prepared on a flat stone. Medicine and much chalk are tied up in a strip of cloth. Other medicines are cut up and stuffed into wooden pipes which are fixed to a cord. Nine hens are then killed and resin with medicine is used to stop up the pipes.

After this, medicine is cut up for the heart and the top of the head of the sculpture, and duly affixed. Nine hens and a goat are slaughtered. These are thrown away to the accompaniment of the song: "Eh, dia bilezi, villages spoil it (nkisi), console me, e-e-e". A medicine is now prepared for a gun, with which magic shots are to be fired. They take the gun to the crossroads to bless it with nsamba-pepper and nsaku-nsaku, which are mixed with palm wine.

The nganga then gets his payment, consisting of ten pieces of cloth, nine hens and eleven calabashes for palm wine. He says: "Yobo, yobo, yobo (thanks)", whereupon they sit down, drink and dance.

The nganga then gets them to cry in unison: "Wa", to which the response is "Wangula!" (make light). "Wa!" — "Wangula bungu!" (let the mist clear).

The nganga must not allow brands to be carried past behind his back, must not eat the flesh of the cock with another, nor eat fresh meat with blood; he may not enter a menstruation hut and he must always drink the first mug of palm wine. If he hears the sound of a blow during a brawl he starts and seizes the dealer of the blow by the neck.

If he is to kill a hen for a sick person he gets someone to beat a little ndungu-drum and cut up medicine for the hen. The medicine is stuffed into the gun, which is fired at the door of the house where the kanda of the sick man is assembled. The hen is thrown away when killed. Anyone who takes it must pay ten bundles of blue beads.

Mukusi nsi is a nkisi without sculpture; it is kept in a lukatu-packet. It gives rise to all sorts of stomach complaints, such as e.g. diarrhoea and sunken belly; it also causes swollen eyes and legs etc. Anyone suffering from one of these ailments is thus treated with this nkisi with a medicine consisting of the dimbuzu herb, lemba-lamba, bonzi-leaves and ordinary medicine. Further, various kinds of wood are boiled, and the patient must drink the concoction with a spoon. The nganga then thrusts his hands into nkisi and strokes the crown of the patient's head with them, saying: "Mfula mbote, good dream. Dream of your dead ancestors. Do not dream of another's ancestors". He thrusts his hands into nkisi again and

strokes the navel of the sufferer, saying: "There is something living in there. There is something living in there".

After this the patient is given nkaku-medicine mixed with salt. This he is to take with him and eat as soon as he begins to get stomach-ache.

It is also possible to dig a pit outside the sick man's house. In this are placed medicinal herbs with which the nganga massages him. He may also be massaged with a banana shoot.

If the patient has fallen ill in consequence of disobedience to deceased ancestors and their kandu-prohibitions, also Kula's nganga is summoned to go to the burial ground and beg for mercy from the dead. In this case they take a pot with them and put it on a wooden tripod on the burial mound of the fathers. The pot contains chalk and water. A fire is lighted under it and the nganga says: "You have made the prohibition, now the child is ill. Leave the child, so that it may get better and shoot animals and I may eat the hearts". As soon as the pot boils over and the contents spill into the grave the child gets better.

Nkisi nsi is also used as a coronation nkisi.

Ngwima is a nkisi and a horrible, poisonous mixture of all sorts of things that have been named after the nkisi and its sculpture. On the head and breast of the latter hearts are affixed. These contain both ngwima and ordinary medicine. A mirror-like object is also stuck to the chest with gum.

The ngwima-medicine contains first of all a quantity of pounded up gunpowder, pieces or pounded up portions of bitter, poisonous soko-bulbs and nkasa-poison, greasy bits of cloth collected from the rubbish heap, sotya, huku and lumbiti frogs, urine, poisonous nyondo-cactus etc. All these ingredients are dissolved on a plate on which gunpowder and water have been poured. The whole is now mixed up and called Ngwima. This medicine is made in secrecy and not in the middle of the village, so that the people shall not be acquainted with the ingredients in the mixture. When everything is dissolved it is poured into a large bottle for keeping. The leaves are also pounded up and made into a bonzo-medicine which is likewise put aside for safe-keeping.

The nganga blesses the medicine by tasting a cup of it to procure wealth for himself. The novices do the same. If a novice contravenes nkisi's laws ngudi a nganga must come and soak the bonzo-mixture in water, squeeze it out and give some of it to the offender to drink if the latter has come down with stomach-ache or a swollen belly. He will then get better, provided he has no kundu-tumour, in which case he will die through ngwima.

In Mayombe, ngwima is like nkasa-poison, although other secret things are added; but it is called ngwima and not nkasa on account of the whites, as they have forbidden the nkasa ordeal.

If there is a high mortality in a village Ngwima's nganga is fetched by the chief to give each villager a cup of ngwima-mixture. Both children and adults must drink some of it. On a sucking infant at the mother's breast they smear medicine everywhere but on the heart.

When the villagers have drunk the medicine they must not sleep all that night, for the people beat the drum and dance until the next day.

Ngwima is not eaten like nkasa, and bandoki do not immediately fall down and die. Those who have eaten ngwima feel joyful and dance all night, yet they feel quite fresh the next day. But after the lapse of three or four days some may die, while others suffer from constipation. A person who has fallen ill after eating ngwima can be treated with nkisi's bonzo-mixture, which is given him to drink. But if he should die, he has a kundu-gland.

In certain tracts Ngwima's nganga has his staff in his hand. If they fetch him to unmask a ndoki he can smell out the latter with the staff. When seeking a ndoki the nganga strikes his staff on the ground nadu-du-du. When he is smelling out the others beat the drum and sing. The nganga then plies Ngwima's nkwanga-rattle. Round the latter is wound rattan, and it contains makomo-komo-seed. He holds the staff in his left hand and shakes the rattle with his right until the treatment is concluded.



Fig. 28. Sculpture, Sundi (Laman 617).

## CHAPTER XIV

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### Worship of Minkisi

Wooden sculptures are worshipped and invoked as part of the rites of the minkisi to which they belong, in treating the sick as in all other cases. The largest sculptures belong to the Nkondi family. In the North, among the Bembe, for instance, the small and beautiful wooden sculptures contain a nkuyu spirit to help and protect them. These sculptures lack the usual salu medicine bags; instead, the medicine is mixed into the resin stuck to the legs of the nkisi. This is covered by the piece of cloth that serves as the sculpture's costume.

The wooden sculptures are of different types. Most of them are human images, others portray dogs or lions, symbolizing the swiftness or strength of the nkisi.

Most of these sculptures have a hideous appearance, some of them have a deformity such as a goiter, others carry heavy burdens or clasp their hands over their heads as a sign of mourning. This is intended to demonstrate the power of the image and to inspire fear and respect.

Although the sculpture may represent a dead paramount chief, a mighty hunter, or a powerful ndoki, it is not carved to resemble the model; instead it wears the insignia of his rank, for instance a staff for a chief, or a gun for a hunter.

All sculptures have somewhat bent knees. They have the crouching posture of a dancer, and thus represent living people or nkuyu spirits. A sculpture with straight legs, which does not exist, would represent a corpse with its legs laid out straight. Exceptions from this rule are sculptures carved as a hobby or with the object of selling them.

A nkisi is given a male sculpture if the one to go into ecstasy at the time of its origin was a man, if it was a woman, a female sculpture is carved. Sometimes, however, a sculpture is made to symbolize a powerful man by giving it a truly stalwart appearance and flashing eyes. A male sculpture is often included in a nkisi to give it greater strength and valour.

When the sculpture is to assist in smelling out something, the nganga inspects the seat of the sculpture, partly to ascertain that it still contains its nkuyu spirit and its power, and partly to mislead other banganga. To treat someone who is ailing, the medicine bundle is untied and if the nkisi has a sculpture, it is placed beside the bundle. The invocations are made according to the ritual that is proper to the nkisi and the medicine and include appeals to the nkuyu spirit contained in the sculpture.

With the oldest minkisi, sculptures appear to have been less common, although they did

contain a nkuyu spirit, symbolized by an ear of maize or something similar. Sculptures appear to be a fairly recent addition. They are especially common among the Sundi north of the Congo and may have been introduced from peoples living further north.

In those parts where sculptures are an object of worship, it actually is a nkuyu spirit that is invoked, a supernatural being that through the medium of the sculpture warns against danger and gives help in difficulties. The usual sacrifice consists of a few drops of hen's blood. The sculptures themselves are generally called nkuyu too. Ancestral images, among the Bembe made from cloth, are likewise called nkuyu or zidi, zizi (meaning effigy, image). To my knowledge these images are never called nzambi. On the other hand, this name can be bestowed on someone who has died, to indicate that he is now a supernatural being with greater power and strength than human beings possess. This is why the grave is also called the house of nzambi.

The power of Nkondi is likewise vested in the nkuyu contained in it. Consequently if an iron pin is hammered into Nkondi to secure a revenge, Nkondi itself is unable to do anything; it is the nkuyu housed in it that goes to the attack and takes revenge. The nkuyu is imagined as a mist, that can be seen but not touched.



*Fig. 29. Sculpture, the lower Congo (Laman 1822).*

## The Banganga

Usually it is a high nganga (ngudi a nganga) who instructs new banganga in the art of gathering the appropriate medicines to make up various minkisi, each with its own special functions and its own special rites and ceremonies. One who has mastered this art is called a nganga nkisi.

In the majority of cases the profession is embraced as a result of a successful cure by a nkisi, partly from a wish to honour it and partly because the cured patient is attracted by the profits to be made from healing the sick.

Occasionally, someone becomes a nganga involuntarily, by falling into ecstasy before an object that is identified as a nkisi by the banganga. Since the nkisi so clearly has shown its favour in manifesting itself to him, he is expected to gather the appropriate medicines and other elements required to make up this nkisi, which will bring him happiness and prosperity.

Elderly or rich people may become banganga for the purpose of gaining personal honour, riches or power and manufacture the nkisi that will help them attain this goal.

Others, again, become banganga and use the nkisi to diagnose illness, find lost articles, reveal crimes and, not least, to hunt up bandoki so that they may be given nkasa.

As a consequence, the functions of the banganga vary greatly. The nganga manga (ngombo, suku) is called the smell diviner, as he is guided in his work by the smell of aromatic herbs, which he waves under his nostrils to ascertain the correct answer to his questions. These banganga are as a rule quite proficient in solving problems by falling into ecstasy. Their diagnosis in cases of illness is not inept and they are usually able to unmask the culprit in cases of adultery or theft. In the French Congo, such banganga hold consultation in the markets, where they solve a variety of problems. Their technique of investigation varies considerably. To some of them, the correct answer is revealed by the fact that their hands slap together. Others use a glass marble or something of the sort, that is forcibly ejected from their mouths at the crucial moment. Others, again, who swallowed a luzimba shell (=zibula) when assembling their nkisi, feel the answer through various bodily sensations.

The nganga mvutudi (the redeemer) restores the nsala soul to a sick person when it is "waning" and "crumbling at the edges".

The nganga nkasa supervises the nkasa ordeal to test suspected bandoki. The nganga bau similarly decides the guilt or innocence of the accused, using bau powder.



The nganga samuna (the reporter) is a confessed and pardoned ndoki, who has been appointed the watch man of the village against the incursions of the bandoki.

The nganga tobe is the head of a kanda officiating in the ancestor cult. The nganga nkisi heals the sick, using one or more minkisi. Illnesses of all kinds are in fact often called nkisi. The nganga, having been cured himself by a nkisi, has learnt to assemble it under the guidance of a high nganga in order to share in the power of the nkisi. The nkisi itself being unable to find the required objects and medicines that give it its power, this is the duty of the nganga. Once he has instilled the power in the nkisi, he has the means both to inflict disease and to cure it. For this reason, the nganga always knows which nkisi he is to use for various diseases. A nganga who is ignorant of his nkisi and its powers, is not recognized as a real nganga. In order to be properly informed on this score, he has to study with the oldest high nganga. The novice nganga (mwana nganga) is instructed by the high nganga in the functions of the latter's nkisi. The novice collects the prescribed medicines as well as food, palm-wine and hens, some of which are sacrificed to the nkisi. One high nganga may instruct several novices at the time; he is furthermore surrounded by assistants (maduki) and women who prepare the food. If the assembling of the nkisi requires singing and dancing, more helpers must be found. Female assistants are called mimbanda.

The novice is taught the name of every medicine by phrases and songs and a variety of ceremonies and rites. Occasionally he is also taught the art of putting charms like mfunya hairs into the nkisi, and how to remove them when they have fulfilled their purpose.

A very resourceful novice may acquire more advanced knowledge than his fellow novices about the nkisi by bribing the high nganga with food and palm-wine. He may later on his own discover new medicines and techniques for curing diseases. The instruction of the novice continues day by day, with daily consecrations by the application of chalk and yellow ochre, until the nkisi is completed. After he has been instructed in the prohibitions, he is required to demonstrate his detailed knowledge of the nkisi. If he passes the test, he is recognized as a nganga. No official investiture takes place. The new banganga of a nkisi march round the market place, fetching soil from the crossroads or the roads leading to it, to prevent the nkisi from making them insane. On completion of his training, a mwana nganga may in his turn become a ngudi a nganga teaching novices. A new nganga, who has desecrated his nkisi by ignoring its prohibitions or by other offences, must request the assistance of the high nganga to be purified and to exalt (tombula) the nkisi.

Banganga are often named for the nkisi of their manufacture, but quite as often they assume new venerable names, such as Mulongo, Makima and Muntanda, to show that they consider themselves superior to other banganga.

In certain cases, the nganga must ally himself (bonga kibulu) with certain animals, partly to hide his soul in them and partly to have their assistance in his nefarious practices. Such alliances may be formed with the mbumbula (a mole), the mfwenge (a species of the mongoose), the mboma snake, the kungu owl, the leopard, and the crocodile, to name but a few.

If a sleeping nganga on being woken starts up with a rush, this indicates that his life is hidden in a bird. A nganga who flees speedily when an attempt is made to tie him up,

has hidden his life in a partridge, one who rushes straight up in the air has hidden it in a lusuiki hawk.

Female banganga are quite as powerful and influential as their male colleagues. Once they have mastered the intricacies of one nkisi, banganga frequently continue with other minkisi. Banganga living in the same village usually assemble their minkisi on the same stone and in the same enclosure, to prevent professional jealousy and intrigues. The banganga are brethren bound by mutual promises.

It is strictly forbidden to bind a fellow nganga of the same nkisi, the argument being: "How would a nganga be successful in healing the sick if he and his fellow banganga are involved in intrigues and live in discord with each other". Banganga of other minkisi may say: "One who has bound his fellow nganga is not welcome among us, because he lacks in respect for his brethren". If the wife of a nganga commits adultery with a colleague of her husband's, she has sinned against the nkisi prohibitions. She is unfaithful to her people, as it is forbidden to commit adultery with the wife of a brother.

Banganga renowned for their curing powers and other astounding feats are highly respected and feared and are believed to be allied to powerful spirits. Old banganga often resort to black magic and are consequently despised. Often they dose their enemies with poisoned medicines causing them to waste away and die soon afterwards. Their secret magic can at times be of benefit to the community, as opposed to kindoki, and they perform miracles of healing with it. Usually the magic lies in secret medicinal herbs. Hence the difference between a nganga and a ndoki is not very marked, as the former too, uses secret magic and, if he masters a major nkisi, can use it to practise witchcraft and eat people. According to popular belief, the miracles performed by the banganga are achieved by sorcery and secret magic.

The banganga of nkisi Kula are able to see the bankuyu, attacking and extracting them when they have taken possession of someone's body. They are expert conjurers, and their tricks are regarded as miracles. For this reason they are proficient in unmasking bandoki.

Other banganga transform themselves into animals, either taking the life of the desired animal or attacking and stealing another's animal. In this way the banganga are able to bewitch property and crops and to send wild beasts to eat plantations bare of their crops, or to steal the pigs and hens in the village. They are usually prompted by envy.

The banganga take part in ordeals to decide the guilt or innocence of the accused. They have various tricks to affect the outcome of the ordeals. The nganga may give the accused a mug with tiny holes in the bottom, and order him to fetch water in it. If the water runs out he is guilty. The only way to keep the water in the mug is for the accused to get hold of half rotten leaves to put on the bottom, or to hold one hand lightly over the mouth of the mug. Another time the nganga places a blue bead under the eye-lid of the suspect. If the bead penetrates further under the eye-lid, the accused is guilty of some offence. Sometimes the nganga hits someone over the head with a dibu bell to indicate his guilt.

In wartime, the nganga subjects the men to certain tests, with nkisi Nkiduku for instance. When this test is over, the warriors are to strike the nkobo grass with saplings of

ndongila bananas. If anybody cuts himself on the grass, the nganga feels it. They all proceed to a menstruation hut. The nganga enters first, throwing a gun to each of them. If anybody drops his gun, the nganga feels this too. He then tells all those who cut themselves, or who dropped their guns or who stumbled under the legs of Bwisa biheemi that they are not allowed to take part in the war. He tells those selected for battle: "Anyone of you who is stung by a bee during the battle is to return home". Thereafter the nganga Bwisa (a nkisi biheemi) and some old women spread cloths on the ground, undress and turn their seats to the warriors, saying: "Mamba, mamba (war cry), those who fire at you, may they hit the kimfwita tree. Naked we bore you, we did not bear you dressed, hence it is above water, may it not move down to the water, rob, fight like Bwisa biheemi. You have not been consecrated in the name of nkisi Nkiduku, watwa walula (ready, seasoned is he)".

The nganga draws mamoni lines and figures of chalk and ndimba red on his forehead and body to inspire respect.

The high nganga commands the greatest respect because of his expert knowledge of his nkisi and its medicines. His magical skill is so great that he may be able to give help from a considerable distance. Certain professional secrets he tries to keep to himself, but if a fellow nganga of the same nkisi approaches him with sufficient amounts of food and palm-wine, the high nganga may occasionally reveal a thing or two.

The high nganga, deriving a substantial income from his nkisi, may advise his younger brothers: "Children, assemble this nkisi while I am alive to control it". A nganga with twin children stands high in the popular esteem and is often considered superior to all other banganga.

A layman who is the father of twins may bless guns and hunting dogs, as twins are regarded as the children of nkisi Funza, that is, nkisi people. When a father of twins blesses a gun, he places his right foot on it and says: "I, your mother, and father of twins, a creation of bakisi of Mount Mpumbu".

When a nkisi is to be blessed, the banganga likewise call in a father of twins, as one who has an affinity with the bakisi, in fact, is counted as one of them and never needs to be afraid of them. He is allowed to eat from palms or other trees that are protected by magic.

A defiled nganga is purified by fellow banganga of the same nkisi. They paint him with stripes of chalk and yellow ochre and spit nsamba pepper on him. Beating the ndungu drum, they proceed to seat him in a circle and march round him. A fellow nganga points a knife at his belly and back. He is seized by ecstasy and may appear lifeless. Finally, he is given a new name, thus leaving behind him what he has defiled.

If the nganga of nkisi Kula has ignored the prohibitions, he must kill a hen and drip its blood on the image to propitiate Kula and prevent the revenge of the nkisi. A nganga of several minkisi is defiled if he slanders his colleagues, commits adultery or steals. He may not use his minkisi again until he has met his colleagues in seclusion, bringing food and palm-wine to be reproved and chastened. When he has confessed his guilt, they eat the food and drink the palm-wine. Afterwards the erring nganga is blessed. He has been forgiven

and may again use his minkisi. The banganga respect one another and the nkisi precepts make them fear to be disgraced by their brethren.

It is possible for a nganga to have several minkisi, provided that their prohibitions not be mutually exclusive.

A nganga feels an affinity with his nkisi once he has assembled it and pins his faith on it. He knows its preferences from the teachings of the high nganga. It is of vital importance that the prohibitions and laws of the nkisi be observed. Manga (fyela) and the nganga are the servants of the nkisi's mwela, ascertaining the wishes of the nkisi and the cause of its anger.

Banganga belonging to the same nkisi family hold each other dear and may not compete or fight among themselves. Competitions are held, on the other hand, among banganga of different nkisi families, to show which nkisi is the stronger and better. They spread out magic leaves, unleash storms and whirlwinds, throw meteorites at their opponents and cause lightning to strike in their villages to burn down their houses. If the lightning does not cause any material damage or fatalities in the village, the local banganga claim to be the stronger, having caught the thunderbolts or stars that fell. When large swarms of shooting stars fall, the banganga compete among themselves; the majority of the stars fall into the sea.

Other banganga, moreover, perform miracles and produce omens, predict future events or conjure up the dead or their spirits. The nganga nkuyu, for instance evokes the dead with the aid of minkisi Lemba, Samana, Londa, Sakuzi or Mpodi. Benificent nganga magic is practised openly to heal the sick. Malevolent nganga magic is ruled by envy and wickedness.

When a nganga has been summoned, he seldom comes on the day agreed upon, for fear of treachery. With the aid of a wanga he can find out whether there is any danger and acts accordingly. "If Nzambi wakes us and I have ascertained that my body is healthy, I will go to the brother-in-law summoning me".

The nganga can settle a matter by throwing dice (mpanza). It is agreed that the throw consisting of three mpanza facing down and one facing up loses, with two mpanza facing up and two facing down as the winning throw.

A way to settle disputes between hunters, is to have one of them take a loaded gun to a copse and fire at the first animal he sees. If the animal is killed by his shot, he wins, if not, he loses.

When a nganga dies, his nkisi is defiled until it is adopted by someone else, who replaces the old medicine heart with a new one, under the supervision of a high nganga. The nkisi of a dead nganga as well as his practice may be inherited by his son, if he is willing to perform the necessary rites to make it function again. To this end, a high nganga instructs him in the intricacies of both the nkisi and the profession.

If a nganga dies, his brethren of the same nkisi fear that he may fetch them, who made their nkisi on the same stone. To avoid being recognized and captured by the dead nganga if he should happen to meet one of them, they disguise themselves by rubbing their forehead with charcoal every day.

In such cases, many *minkisi* rule that the dead *nganga* fight his surviving colleague, that he may soon follow him. The deceased directs storms against the *mfuma* tree, because the living *nganga* has hidden his *nkinda* protective power at its roots. The tree is not easily felled by storm, but if this happens, the protective power is gone. This power enables the *nganga* to transform himself into a frog and hide in a hole when the magic storms are unleashed by the deceased. Surviving *banganga* may also adopt the guise of a brooding hen or dress up as women to avoid recognition by their dead fellow.

When the *nganga* of *nkisi* Kongo has died, his frontlet is removed and given to his successor, who is painted with chalk and presented with leaves by the high *nganga*. When he has accepted the leaves, he asks himself: "Speak, is this truly his *nkisi*?" "Lo" (yes). "Is it his *nkisi*?" "Lo". He goes into ecstasy and shakes the dead *nganga*. Thereupon he removes old *mfumbu* resin from the image and replaces it with new medicine, which is his duty, as he has accepted the frontlet. With the blessing of *nkisi* Kongo, he will capture many souls (*ndunzi*) and entice numerous animals into the *lukabu* trap.

If a high *nganga* leaves a son or a daughter on his demise, several *minkisi* may be inherited. A *nganga* holds a *nkisi* and says to the heir: "Extend your hands and give thanks standing". The heir claps his hands thrice and is then instructed in the manufacture of the *nkisi*'s medicine and its functions in the treatment of illness.

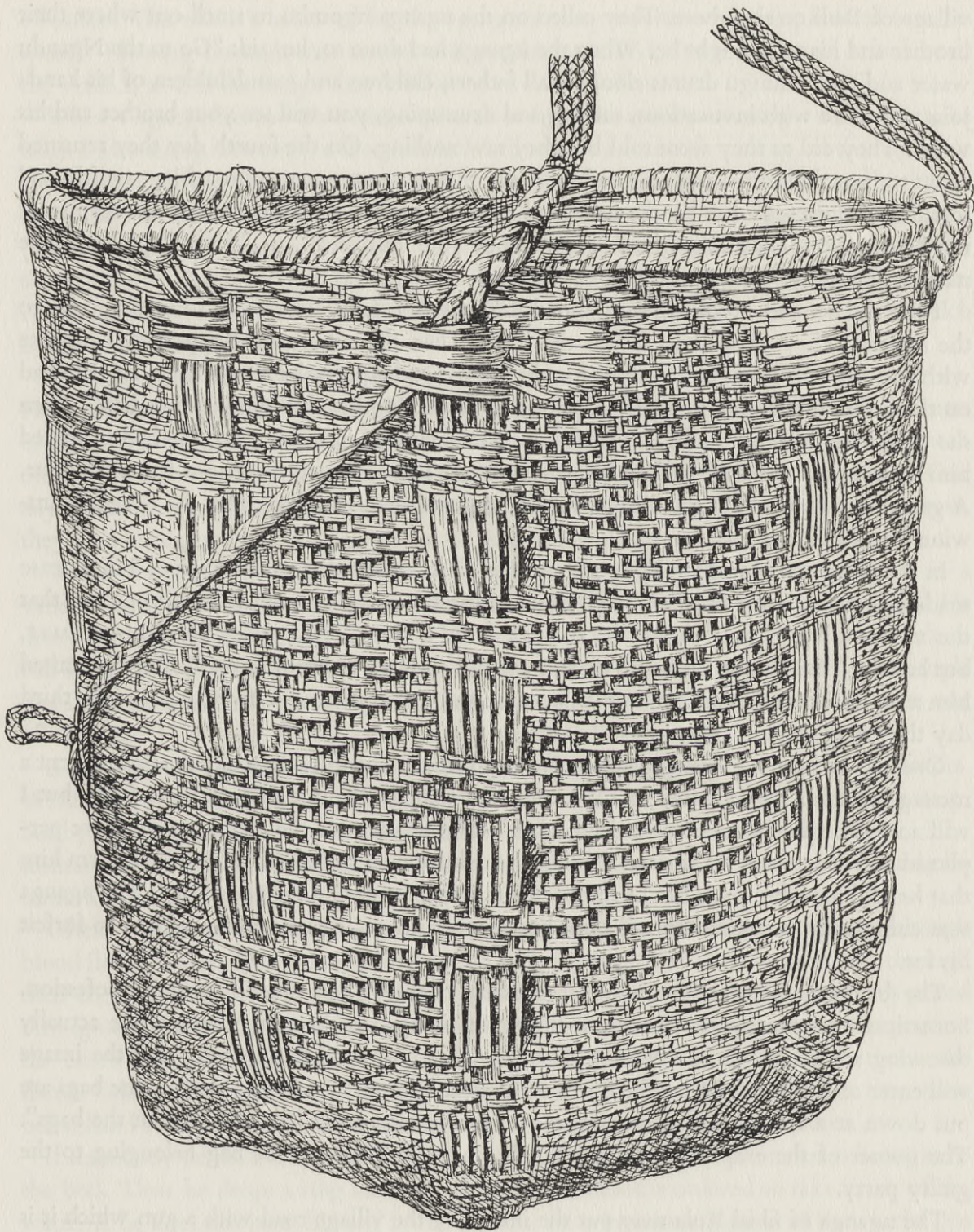
A novice inheriting the *nkisi* of a dead *nganga* may, together with the *nkisi*, be taken along to the dead by the high *nganga* to be presented to them. Should the dead not know the novice, they might tie him up and beat him when they encounter him in the village. The *nganga* must have such a close affinity with the chief of the dead that their every wish is identical. The dead are to obey the wishes of the *nganga*, while the *nganga* is to obey the chief of the land of the dead.

A man called NANKUMBA, who was raised in the *kanda* of his father, absolutely insisted on acquiring one of the glorious *minkisi* of the *kanda*, which he could not, seeing that he belonged to his mother's *kanda*.

He decided to return to his village and his *kanda* in Bedi, where they had many *minkisi*. On his departure, he put two calabashes of palm-wine in a *ntete* basket, which he took along to his village. One calabash he put in the *mpidi* basket of his wife. To his younger brothers he said: "Come and follow me on the great *nkenge* day. Ah, peace be with you!"

When he and his wife came to the *Ngandu* water, they sank deeper into it with each step, until finally they had disappeared under the surface. Their ancestors and the *basimbi* spirits perceived their desire and longing to assemble a *nkisi*. Down in the deep, they saw many villages and met the people of the Nama king. Everywhere they were asked: "Whither leads your way?" — "To the village of WAMBA NDILU". Presently they arrived there. They put down the palm-wine. The next morning, they were allowed to start collecting the medicines to assemble the *nkisi*. It was Nakongo. Their bodies were painted with chalk and yellow ochre all over. Thereupon they sang the songs and cut the medicine as prescribed by tradition. Others hollowed out a *nsansi* rattle, to become the *kumbi* rattle of Nakongo.

The younger brothers set out to join them as agreed. They found them neither in the



*Fig. 30. Basket of mpidi-type, Bemba in Kingoyi (Laman 987).*

village of Bedi or elsewhere. They called on the nganga ngombo to smell out where their brother and his wife might be. When the nganga had done so, he said: "Go to the Ngandu water and take ndungu drums along. If all fathers, children and grandchildren of his kanda join you there with invocations, singing and drumming, you will see your brother and his wife". They did as they were told but they saw nothing. On the fourth day they returned again to beat the drums and sing and suddenly they saw a woman approaching, swiftly and solemnly. They took her by the hand and held her basket, which contained the sceptre of nkisi Nakongo. They asked her: "How about your husband?" — "They kept him. The nkisi is not ready. Come back on nkandu day".

They did so and invoked, sang and drummed as before. They saw something rise to the surface. They grasped it. It was the hand. Then the whole nkisi appeared, complete with fur, big and small bells and its kumbi rattle. On his arrival at the village, he fell dead on the ground, but his wife said: "A prayer to Santu. Mother, his mind is disturbed". Then she besprinkled his head and legs with bonzo medicine. He awoke when she had sprinkled him thrice, and seated himself on his papyrus mat. The nkisi was suspended from the door. A great feast was held in the village. Hens and goats were slaughtered by the dozen. Palm-wine flowed like water.

In the village of NANKUMBA's father, meanwhile, a serious disease was raging. This disease made the entire body swell. A smell diviner was summoned and gave as his opinion that the nkisi of NANKUMBA should be consulted for a cure. They called upon NANKUMBA, but he said: "But surely, I have no nkisi, I was not allowed to assemble one". They promised him a pig if he would come. NANKUMBA came and treated them for two days. On the third day they were cured. This nkisi still exists.

Once upon a time, a nganga had cured a sick person. The following day the nganga sent a message that he would come to collect his fee, adding: "You may give me a fowl, but I will accept neither a cock nor indeed a hen". The relatives of the cured patient were perplexed and did not know what to do. They asked the chief for advice. He said: "Inform him that he will have his fowl, but he must fetch it neither at dark nor in daylight". The nganga was completely perplexed and did not know when to go. Consequently he had to forfeit his fee.

The banganga have many ways of tricking people when practising their profession. Sometimes, a nganga may appear to throw the image on the refuse heap while actually throwing something quite different. Then he takes two food-bags, saying that the image will enter one of them. When he opens it, he stealthily puts the image into it. The bags are put down at a distance from each other and the nganga says: "Go and look in the bags". The owner of the empty bag triumphs, the image seeking out the bag belonging to the guilty party.

The nganga of nkisi Kula may put the image by the village road with a gun which it is to fire. Soon after nganga has left, the gun is discharged. This is contrived by the nganga lighting some tinder, which carries the fire to the gun and causes it to go off.

The image of Nkusu (the parrot) raises its own voice to point out thieves and other

offenders. This effect is achieved by the nganga putting a perforated pumpkinseed into his nostril. Blowing through that nostril will produce a sound, "swe-swe-swe", which seals the verdict, as it is the image that is believed to have spoken.

When a nganga has to visit a burial ground to fight the spirit possessing a sick person, he takes a gun along. Presently a shot is heard, followed by a terrible yelling, as the nganga is attacked and tied up by the bankuyu spirits. He has not been hit by the shot and rushes to the village to show how he has been tied up with creepers by the dead, calling "I-i-i" (denoting pain). "Come and help me. They have tied my arms tightly on my back and put the gun there. Quick, cut off the creepers. It hurts so". Thereupon he can cure the patient. He himself has bound his arms and the gun to his back at the burial ground, a trick which is said to be very difficult.

The nganga of nkisi Nsumbu was able to put glowing coals in his mouth with impunity. He could also conjure up the dead for his audience by putting a pinch of ash in the corners of their eyes, which cleared their sight to behold the dead. A nganga by the name of KANGA often visited the market Nkooyi Ngwala. The people there decided to capture him. One day, when he was going there to sell livestock, he was told by his people: "Don't go there, they plan to capture you". Nevertheless, he left, taking along two pigs and three goats.

When the people of Nkooyi Ngwala saw him, they prepared an ambush down in a valley. Coming to the top of the adjacent mountain, KANGA took two termite hills. He drove his animals into one of them and hid himself in the other. Then he let both of them roll swiftly towards the ambush. As they saw the two termite hills approaching, the people fled from their ambush, assuming that KANGA was threatening them in this way. Then one of them said: "Let us go, KANGA has already passed with his two pigs and three goats."

KANGA always resorted to this trick when somebody wanted to put him in the stocks. When the people finally realized that KANGA was hiding in a termite hill, they broke it up, but by then KANGA had entered a very small mumbooji ant. His livestock was hidden in the stomach of the ant. His kinkonko animals were the mwana mvula cricket and the mbolantonto termite that builds its hill very swiftly.

Often, banganga cut themselves in the tongue without showing any pain, although blood flows. Others stick a needle, one end of which is festooned with hen feathers, through their cheek and then remove it, leaving no visible indication on the needle of having passed through the cheek. They rub the wound with medicine and red or yellow ochre to prevent the cheek from swelling. Other banganga make big fires and dance through them, the flames licking their bodies but causing them no harm. The explanation is that they have beforehand rubbed their bodies with the juicy roots (mboobo) of banana plants.

If somebody denies a charge of theft, the nganga fills a pot with water that is brought to the boil. Then he drops a ring into the pot and the accused is ordered to take it out of the water. If he does not burn himself in the process, he is innocent. Instead of water, the pot may contain burning oil.

During important feasts, the banganga perform numerous tricks to prove their skill. One of them may summon a snake, frog, lizard or some other animal to appear. Thereupon



another nganga summons a swarm of bees to sting a competitor. He achieves this by retreating behind a house to put the wings and stings of a few bees under his nails. Then he advances towards the other nganga, scattering the wings and stings in the air, and live bees appear at once and sting his competitor.

In such a competition (mpaana), one nganga may conjure up rain and storm to ravage the banana trees and the houses in the village. A second nganga may see to it that the fowl of the village die in masses and that the palm-trees burn down. Both banganga fall ill from their exertions but keep watching each other like hawks to see who dies first.

Other banganga show their powers by such feats as vomiting blood, swallowing a knife and passing it in their stools, discharging a gun loaded with ashes, and sticking a porcupine quill through their hand without drawing blood. Some banganga seat themselves on the point of a tanzi knife and rotate in this position without cutting themselves. One nganga threw maize into a pot of water. Immediately, the maize began to grow and sprout leaves. One nganga, to conclude, cut his tongue in two, causing the blood to gush from his mouth. After eating a fresh manioc root, peeled and blessed with medicine, the tongue was healed and the blood stopped flowing.

One nganga kept nkisi Bunzi in a wooden box. When he invoked Bunzi and put his hand into the box, it appeared as if the point of a knife had pierced the back of the hand. This was the work of the binkonko snakes of the nganga. Because of these snakes, no unauthorized person can lift the box. When the nganga lifts the box, it spouts water.

Some other common traditions about banganga may be related. The nganga of nkisi Mukwanga can fire a gun loaded with stones, while the stones remain in the barrel. When he points the fired gun downwards, the stones roll out of the barrel. Some banganga are able to produce hailstones from their eyes and nose, or nsokya husks out of their forehead. Others can fix a nkisi image to their forehead so that it cannot fall down.

Certain banganga climb the top of a banana leaf and seat themselves on it, boastfully pointing out that the leaf does not break.

There are banganga who can plant a banana tree in the courtyard that grows and matures so quickly, that its fruits may be eaten the very same day. Likewise, when they plant a palm sapling, it immediately produces ripe nuts that are picked and eaten. Others put a nkisi image and banana leaves in a nkutu bag. Some minutes later, banana leaves have spouted from the image.

Some can stretch out their tongue so far that they can put it on top of their nose. Finally there are those who cause their image to cry, leaving visible tear stains on its cheeks.

When the nganga of nkisi Kula embarks on a cure, he can produce makuta amulets from anyone of the bystanders and from any place on the body, head, neck, back, breast, or belly. When Kula is assembled, the banganga swallow one or two kuta amulets, that multiply inside.

Other banganga swallow gunpowder. When they are healing someone, they stand by the fire and shake some gunpowder from their loincloth into the fire, where it flares up. Others hide gunpowder in their hair and bring about the same effect by lifting their cap.

A nganga by the name of LEKE climbed into a palm tree without using a climbing sling. When he had reached the top, he hung by his feet with his head pointing down. He let himself fall and was killed. After long deliberation, the people covered him with dry banana leaves and lit the leaves to burn his body. When the leaves had been consumed by the fire, LEKE rose, shaking off the ashes.

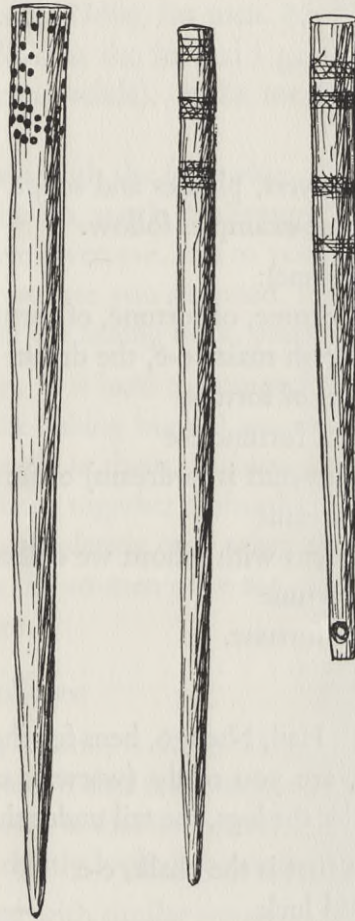


Fig. 31. Needles of bone (*fiya diangwanu* or *diantsetsila*), Sundi in Musana (Laman 1474/6).

## Religious Ceremonies

The bakisi are invoked with prayers, phrases and songs, all intending to illustrate their various functions and powers. Some examples follow.

Kinkuma (the nkisi of good fortune):

(Kinkuma) of fortune, of fortune, of fortune e-e  
The dream of fresh maize e-e, the dream of  
manioc, a dream of fortune  
It is (a dream) of fortune e-e  
A dream of palm-nuts is (a dream) of fortune e-e  
Of salt I have dreamt  
Dreamt of maidens with whom we dallied merrily,  
(A dream) of fortune  
Oh, a dream of fortune.

Nsengo (hoe, for luck):

Hail, Nsengo, hens for the men. Hail, Nsengo, hens for the women. It dawns for the hoe, darkness falls for the hoe. Say, are you ready (watwa), say, are you seasoned (walula). What I received are the spurs under the legs, the tail under the legs.

E, what comes first is the chalk, e-e  
E, I arouse good luck  
They succeed and succeed again, e-e  
E, dream of maidens e-e  
E, tumsi bird, this is luck.

Nzau: Speak, Nzau, for men. Speak, Nzau, for women. Ah, the nkisi has not passed the mountain Mpumbu. Make me sharp as a knife, set me ablaze like a fire. A cock I sacrificed to elicit your frankness, oh Nzau! Oh, what a Nzambi this is! Take sows, take boars. Bring grass and I shall cleanse it.

E, Nzau, my pigs I rule  
E, Nzau, my goats I rule  
E, Nzau, my hens I rule

E, Nzau, the pigs of fortune, the goats of fortune  
Our fortune is not envied by men  
Our fortune is not envied by women  
E, Nzau!

Nhingu (war nkisi) exists in several variations, but the phrases and prayers are almost identical. Nhingu Ndizi has the following prayer:

Speak, Ndizi, for women. Speak, Ndizi, for men. Men beget, women become mothers. A cock I gave, powder to be fired at the funeral I gave. All you asked for. Tell me, are you ready, well seasoned (watwa walula). Make me like a fire, make me like a (sharp) knife.

Nhingu Malwangu is addressed with the following prayer (nsambu):

E, truly this is a great Nzambi. Eh, speak, Malwangu, for women and for men. A cock and powder for the funeral I have given e-e. It is to you, Malwangu, that I address my call. Tell me, are you ready, fit for use, are you seasoned. Light me like a fire, make me like a (sharp) knife. Eh, may a fish enter the fishing buck, peacefully (kilembe), quietly (kimpoko).

Oh Malwangu, it is hard to comprehend (bindamene)  
Malwangu, the fishing bucks I set out,  
Nothing I caught in them, Malwangu.  
We put our hairs together (mfumbu), may we  
Refrain from slandering each other, Malwangu.  
In my dream the women gave me manioc,  
Eh, Malwangu.

Another song is worded as follows:

Of maidens I dreamt, is she good (suitable)?  
Goat upon goat, is that not suitable, Malwangu?  
Fowl upon fowl, is that not good, Malwangu?  
The body is tightly locked (bewitched).

Nkisi Nhingu senso is invoked with similar songs.

The practice of spitting as an act of consecration or blessing (dima mante) is extremely common. Both as an inalienable part of the nkisi cult and as a common way of invoking good luck, a variety of meanings can be attached to it.

In the nkisi cult, dima is used, on the one hand, to rouse the nkisi to energy, wrath and strength in the execution of its duties, on the other hand, to appease and calm it. As a rule, a mouthful of medicine is spit or squirted at it with the words: "Tu (the sound of spitting), Ndemo (the nkisi), tu Ndemo, tu Ndemo", to the accompaniment of the rattle.

With nkisi Nkondi and nkisi Bunzi, among others, the medicine is spit out over the sculpture, especially its face, to make it open its eyes and ears and rouse it to the vigour required for a swift dispatch of its duties.

In order to calm the nkisi and allay its wrath, the nganga blows on it before spitting. Similarly, if a young and an old person get into a violent quarrel, a bystander may pacify them by first blowing and then spitting on their breasts.

A father who notices his child grieving over the death of a relative, may summon it and order it to hold out both its hands. After chewing kimbanzya leaves, he spits in the hands of the child and blesses it with the words: "Kula walama, may you become strong and rich in property (that multiplies, whether livestock or crops), may you go to the water with joy, may you go to the soil with joy, may you go to the market with joy". Again he spits into the child's hands, tu-tu-tu.

All sorts of objects, especially guns, are likewise consecrated by spitting, which makes them untouchable to outsiders.

A home too can be consecrated and blessed in this way, complete with the food and the guests in it. Invited banganga remain on the verandah. Four men of great wisdom shake the nkwangwa rattles, spit and pronounce the blessing.

Another method consists in sprinkling the object with a magic potion, which may be a mixture of lusaka-saku, ngongo beans, tondo mushrooms and lwangu-lwangu herbs, cut up and mixed in a bowl with palm-wine. If guns are to be blessed by the nganga, he steps over them three times, then, lifting one, offers it to the owner. The owner receives it three times and then the nganga says: "Aim at an animal and it will fall. Pursue it and it drops dead. The meat is already on its way." To conclude the ceremony, the guns are made to say nante (click) three times.

Blessings are bestowed on dogs too. Three times the nganga throws them onto the roof, lifts them down and puts them carefully on the ground, saying: "Wherever an animal goes, you will follow. When it puts its nose to the ground, you will do the same. When it lifts its nose into the air, you will do likewise, scenting its trail. When it hides in the thickets, you will follow. On the ground, in the air, be hot on the scent."

By blessing a woman's clothes, everyone else is debarred from using or soiling them. The nganga cuts up medicine and blesses the clothes with it.

When the moon is new, the nganga blesses his nkisi, in order that it may be instilled with the power to inflict illness and he himself may receive many fees in curing them. The nganga invokes the moon: "Oh mothers, my Lord the Moon has renewed itself without any ritual, may he become full, he may already be full. Has someone been taken ill, summon Ngoma who is an adept nganga, that he may heal the patient."

Guns too are blessed at new moon, often by fixing ntima medicine to the butt. This medicine is usually concocted of lusaku-saku, tondo mushrooms and Calabar beans. The tooth of a ndutu rodent may also be gummed to the butt. Such a blessing makes the gun prohibited; no woman or hen is allowed to step over it. The blessing brings the owner of the gun good luck in hunting.

Before embarking on a cure, the nganga consecrates and blesses both himself and the patient by the application of chalkmarks, yellow ochre, charcoal or chewed kola-nut.

A woman's breasts are blessed by smearing them with chalk, charcoal or chewed kola-nut.

Bakisi, spirits of the dead and basimbi can be invoked (lokila nloko) in a variety of ways and for various reasons. When a theft has been committed, nkisi Nsansi may be invoked with the following words: "Lord Nsansi, may it please you to search for my stolen hen. I do not know the identity of the thief. But you will find him. Listen sharply, (it may be) a man or a woman, he or she may be dead now, or may have come from distant parts. Follow the trail of the thieves, be they two, be they three. Eat them with the knife, by the fire, with the gun or in the sky. If you refrain from robbing them, strike. Seek, seek, seek! If he drinks water, bind him. If he smokes tobacco, lift him and throw him in the fire. If he lifts his knife, bind him. If he takes up his gun, bind him. Whoever from whatever kanda stole my hen, find him for me. Should they mix medicine (to protect themselves), nullify its effects. Lord Nsansi, don't you see them anymore? If an animal devoured the hen, it came from Nkondi (po kya Nkondi kyatuuka)".

This is followed by a number of songs:

"Eh-e my lord, cut down, wolo-e-e (interjection)  
Eh, thither he was sent, wolo-o-o.  
Female ndoki, male ndoki.  
Then they ate him, they were two  
A-a there were three of them,  
A-a there were five of them."

"Porcupines he eats, palmwine he drinks,  
A-a, he does not drink palmwine.  
He sets nets for the fish,  
A-a, he does not set them.  
Palmwine he taps, A-a, he does not tap palmwine.  
Across the water he will ferry, A-a, not across water.  
A fire he will build.  
He did not build any fire, but warm himself he will.  
How about you? Lift and throw into the fire.  
Find him for me, I cannot do it."

"Eh, thither he was sent, e wolo-ewe.  
Cut down the mfuma tree, e wolo,  
Where they sealed their agreement.  
Two they were, s-a-a, three  
S-a-a, many they were.  
But aren't you a dog with four eyes?  
You find him, I cannot do it."

It was customary to make an invocation with nloko (incantations) at the bestowal of a gift to the minkisi, especially if this was done by someone ridden by nightmares. The kunda bell of some major nkisi was used at this ceremony, which took place at the crossroads or

in the courtyard. The bell of Makwende rings "deke-deke-deke" to accompany the appeal to Makwende: "Makwende, by your mother, crush the breast, thrust a knife into it, return them to the home of the driver ants. Makwende, by your mother, push out his rectum, let it discharge blood." They may continue to invoke (loka) for two or three days, morning and evening, sometimes moving on to the plains they frequent. One of the songs sung on this occasion starts:

"O-o-o eat, will eat  
E-e-e yaaya, eat, I will eat", etc.

Nloko may also be used to invoke members of the own kanda, whether dead or alive, and belonging to any generation.

Nloko appeals are made, not only to retrieve lost property or to investigate cases of adultery, but also in connection with accidents, as the following, for instance: "Listen mothers, rob, strike, how is it? Well, the young man who was here fetched his climbing-sling, his heart is hot, he climbs the palm-tree, slashes the sling with his knife, it is severed, he plunges nalu (head over heels) to the ground. He cries: yaaya (from pain), this is my finish, this is the end of me, yaaya. Loud weeping is heard. You, Nkondi, know how it happened."

As a variation of lokila nkolo, maloki (bewitching medicine) may be buried in another village, as an act of revenge, usually for non-payment of bridal money or a similar offence. The nganga who is to bury the maloki, blesses his nkisi and states the case in detail, after which the medicine is pounded. It will be buried at the crossroads and by the water sources used by the villagers. By night, emissaries go to the village and bury the medicine, after which they scatter leaves on the roads and paint chalk marks at the crossroads, in the courtyards and on the walls. This is the sight that meets the villagers the following morning, but they take no action until they are sure that the medicine really has the power to harm. If so, they hurry to send a messenger with the promise of a pig to propitiate the other party, in anticipation of the final settlement.

A nkisi may also be invoked to announce (siba) a search for something. When a theft has been committed, any witness to the crime is requested to come forward and report the culprit to the owner of the stolen object. The owner asks the alleged thief: "Tell me, did you take my property?" If the charge is denied, the owner consults a nganga, who drives an iron pin into nkisi Nkondi, referring to the lost object. The witness says: "Give us your answer, you know what happened and you know the thief". If the accused persists in his denials, he and the witness are to exchange mfunya,<sup>1</sup> to be put in the nkisi by the nganga. The accused then appeals to the nkisi: "Speak out, did I take his property? Oh Nkondi, eat me ashore, eat me in the water, eat me wherever I go, Nkondi". Thereupon they beat the nkisi on the forehead with a knife, saying: "Nkondi ye-ye, Nkondi ye-ye (onomatopoetic). Now I have come to fetch you, you are the brave, on behalf of my relative, who is ill.

<sup>1</sup> Hairs, magic knots and similar charms to be put into the nkisi to ensure that the partners in a contract stick to its terms.

Female ndoki, male ndoki present in this village, seek, Kibunzi, don't you see it. He has caused me nothing but grief and hard work. Not for your sake did he eat his food. Make him as wide as the baobab tree, make him as hollow as a gun barrel. If he wants to urinate, restrain him. If he wants to empty his bowels, restrain him. Make him hot (yearning) among other women. Make him restless. He tries sitting down — impossible. He tries standing up — impossible. If he goes to war, may he be killed by a shot aimed at a pigeon, or is he dead, e kyongo! Make him as lean as an eel. When he is given nkasa, may he pass his water and empty his bowels. Make his body swollen, tear out his heart, tear out his lungs. Strike, strike his forehead. Strike, strike his forehead. His head is big. He has made nkisi Mbumba. Po kya Nkondi kyatuuka, (from Nkondi it has come). Tee-teeta (break), kwa-kwanga, kwa-kwanga (cut down), Ma-manika, ma-manika (hang)". Then the other party advances, lifts the knife, and says: "Say, say, say, was it not you who took another's property? Hear, Nkondi, eat me, it is indeed the truth. Didn't you see him? Mbe-mbe (sound of beating)". The chorus joins in: "Hear, Nkondi! Have you heard?" Then he takes the image of Nkondi and drives an iron pin into its body, mbe-mbe, saying: "Father, Father, haven't you heard? The pigs fear, the goats fear ...", etc.

The old people said: "Kota mu nzo a nzambi", go into the house of Nzambi (=great nkisi), when they wished to commit someone absolutely, to a contract of marriage, for instance, by a prayer to the nkisi. The one to give away the bride states the conditions that will ensure his sister's welfare in the prayer. Sometimes both parties provide mfunya, to be put into the nkisi. Someone who is angered may put man or beast under a curse (singa) by uttering a string of abuse like "His eyes protrude like those of the nkabi antelope. E, his legs are thin as the gazelle's. E, his head is like a termite hill. You, young friend, have a belly like an elephant. Lick the buttocks of your betrothed! You corpse, you idler. May the leopard catch you; May the bandoki dismember you. May you die. Mother, mother, your dead mother, come and lick me! E-e syata (term of abuse) come and eat this umbilical cord! Wipe away the fat on every woman in this village! Lick up the urine! May you be forced to run with your hernia."

A woman removes her loincloth and, turning her seat to the victim, says: "May you die and go to your grave. May you come and snatch away what is in between (the clitoris). Rinse out, smack your tongue. Look at me, grab, grab here!" If crops or livestock are eaten by an animal, they may curse: "Eh, leopard, where have you gone to? Are you going to finish off our pigs? May you be caught, torn to pieces, rent in two, you and your chief. May you have a knife thrust into your breast, may your neck be wrung. May you fall into a ravine, you idler, and drop dead suddenly in the plain."

If someone is angered by his nkisi for having tormented him with a prolonged illness and for appearing in his dreams, scaring him badly, he may throw the nkisi away. If it is of the water species, it is thrown into the water, if belonging to the land species, on the ground. At the death of a nganga, a fellow nganga throws away the nkisi of the deceased, saying: "You have caused me to dream weird dreams. You have come and set kimpata dreams upon me. Begone, nobody will fetch you back". Or: "I assembled you so you would heal



me, but you can not do it. Begone. I did not assemble you so you would heal anyone but me. Begone. In vain I have squandered my property on you. Begone. My regard for you has disappeared". Thereupon the nkisi is lowered into the water with the words: "Of yours you have nothing left".

The bankuyu too, may be put under a curse and abused if they persistently torment somebody by dreams and apparitions and leave him no rest. The victim approaches a nkisi, saying: "By your mother (curse) open your eyes and show no weakness. He has protruding eyes like your image. His belly is hard. I kya (the colour) is deep in his buttocks. I kya, in his buttocks it is red. Don't you hear, by your mother, open your ears and eat female, eat male (ndoki)".

A twin birth may be the occasion for uttering curses by nkisi Funza. They hurl abuse, as women do, and display ugly and revolting things, such as excrements and disgusting mats from the refuse heap. The nganga accepts them without recoiling and covers the body of the mother of the twins with them or rubs them on her head and face, in order that she may not repeat the offence.

It is the nganga who consecrates and purifies (byeka) a defiled nkisi, person or thing. A medicine, made from lusaku-saku, nkandikila, tondo and nsamba pepper is tied to the person consulting the nganga. A strip of his loin-cloth is fastened round the head of the nkisi, while the attendant crowd beats the ndungu drum, sings and claps hands. The nganga makes feints with a knife at the flanks of the one to be purified or consecrated, as the case may be. The nganga squirts medicine over him and he goes into ecstasy, crawling about on his mat. The ears, temples, and belly of the subject are smeared with chalk and yellow ochre. He is given a new name and asked: "Do you know the name?" "No, we don't". "NALUSOBO?" "No, not that". "KINKINYA?" "Yes, that is it". Thereupon he is told what prohibitions to observe.

The wife of a dead nganga is purified by cutting off her finger and toe nails, and shaving the hair on the pubes and in her arm-pits. The nail-cuttings and hairs are put on a lemba-lemba leaf, which is laid on a tree that does not sleep (i.e. ants walk up and down the tree).

When a wife dies, the widower is purified under the supervision of his brother-in-law. The hair on the pubes and in the arm-pits is shaven off and placed on a lemba-lemba leaf that is thrown into the water. Thereupon the brother-in-law bathes in this water and his loin-cloth is given to the one who has performed the purification rites. Then he rubs himself with red nkula and, as a final measure, his head is shaven.

When the women have planted a large field with peanuts, a nganga is summoned to consecrate the plantation to prevent the crop from being put under a spell. The nganga ties matuutu grass-stalks together and charges them with stones. The magic guns are blessed and placed at the corners of the plantation amidst the firing of gunpowder. When a ndoki comes across these guns, they are discharged, which is evident from the fact that the stalk has cracked open. If the ndoki is hit, he is bedridden in the village, wounded in the breast. No one may intrude in a plantation thus protected, lest the magic guns be fired. In the same way, property, houses, animals, babies, or even beards may be consecrated (sidika). Simi-

larly, ferry crossings are consecrated, lest crocodiles and hippopotami smash the canoes. One way of desecrating a ferry crossing is to scoop water with a small lombwa pot.

No stones may be thrown at consecrated dogs when they are hunting. Before the game is cut up, the madibu bell of the dog must be shaken.

An entire village may be consecrated to prevent enemies from casting a spell on it. This entails a number of prohibitions; nobody may hitch up his loin-cloth (*nana taakala*), a woman fetching wood may not tie, only twist the rope holding her bundle. As soon as she throws her burden on the ground, she must step on it or the village will be desecrated.

A consecrated head of a *nzo* may not urinate in an upright position, but must squat down.

Consecrations furthermore take place in connection with numerous religious functions, such as initiations and investitures.

Blessings may be bestowed (*sakumuna* — bless) by one person upon another. A father often blesses his child. They grip each other's hands, the father rubbing his forehead against that of his son and saying: "Become sleek and fat as the *kinzenze* cricket, or the *kimpasu* cricket. If you should stumble over a root may it break, catch them (the animals) above and below. May you harvest plenty of peanuts, *myolo-myolo* (expression denoting luck). *Ka nsanga ko, ka nkuku ko* (may all your enterprises be crowned with success), may you work in health and strength". Thereupon he spits into his son's hands and continues: "It is I who am your father, *nanzambi mpungu*. May everything fall to your share and whatever you receive, may it be beneficial. If you stumble over a tree root, may it break. Whoever hates you, may he sleep (remain inactive)".

It is believed that the departed ancestors can bestow blessings upon surviving grandchildren, but frequently the living distrust them and invoke them with curses and harsh words, as with a *nkisi*. They bring a good luck *nkisi*, such as *Nsengo*, to swear by and invoke the ancestors, saying: "Gentlemen, if you don't have our property fetched, may you be eradicated, may you be scattered to the winds. If you do, however, *mbulu!*" Reply: "*Pengo*" (It is the same). "But if he comes to your abode to fetch our people and property, whoever is taken to you, you receive him. Alas, *Nsengo*, kill one another, dismember one another, wherever you dwell!"

A new-born child and its mother are blessed when they are taken outside the house by the *nganga* to be shown to the people. At the same time, the child may be named for a *nkisi*.

A socially important person may bless his inferior, which ensures the latter the same esteem in the community. If the blessing is bestowed by means of a *nkisi*, the patron uses the phrase: "May you use it to heal as I do".

## Sacrifices

Sacrifices (nkadulu) are most common in connection with the ancestor and nkisi cult. They are offered on various occasions, either in thanksgiving or at the request of the nganga.

Since Nzambi is not the object of an actual cult, no proper sacrifices are made to him. It does happen that game is surrendered to Nzambi, if the hunters cannot agree whose shot killed the animal. Animals dying a natural death too, are often surrendered to Nzambi, which means that nobody wants to eat them. Gifts are made to fulfil the obligations existing between father and child. Only the father can bless the gift, regardless of the fact that he may be dead. After a successful hunt, a thanksgiving offering may be made to the ancestors. When a father makes a gift to his son as an act of blessing, he says: "Take what is in front and you shall receive what is below". The son answers: "Yobo, yobo" that is "I thank you" or "Be it so".

When a nganga makes a gift, he walks along the road, while the recipient waits by the roadside. As he presents his gift, the nganga blesses it by spitting on it, saying: "Give me a nganga novice (to teach). Give one for ngudi a nganga, because he received one long ago", meaning that the nganga wishes to teach someone the art of assembling his nkisi for the purpose of earning money.

Wives, children and grandchildren, belonging as they do to another kanda, must show the respect to their fathers and ancestors, dead or alive, that is due to paternity and offer them gifts to keep their favour. Thus discord is prevented and no calamity befalls the children and grandchildren.

Differences arising between children and their departed ancestors may be disclosed either by a nkisi in a dream or by a nganga. The child must then go to the grave with propitiating gifts, consisting of animals, food, palm-wine or whatever else is judged suitable. Gifts to the ancestors may not be blessed, they are only reported to them. Gifts to a nkisi, on the other hand, may be blessed. Food sacrifices should be eaten with a sharp stick on plates, like the food for a nganga nkisi. Some of it is left in a small excavation in the grave. If deprived of their formerly established right to palm-trees and nsafu trees, the children and grandchildren may complain to their dead ancestors. Bringing palm-wine, kola nuts and tobacco leaves, they divide these among the different graves and say: "Fathers and mothers! We, the children and grandchildren left by you, announce that we have not been

assigned any place where we may pick kola nuts and nsafu fruits, nor any palm-trees for our subsistence. That is why we have come to kneel before you, our chiefs. We have brought kola nuts, tobacco and palm-wine, that you may know that we are not calling upon you for nothing". If one of the dead lacks an article of dressing, an arm ring, ankle ring or something of the sort, this is revealed in a dream to a surviving relative. The relative then deposits the desired article at the head of the grave, and one night the departed appears again in a dream, wearing the article.

Lest the dead be forgotten, ancestral houses or shrines have been erected in many places, or else a corner has been reserved for them inside the house, so that daily gifts of palm-wine may be made.

Elaborate shroudings, gun salvos and ornaments on the grave are partly intended as homage to the deceased, but also to invoke his blessing on the donors.

Sacrifices to bankuyu who play pranks in the village may be made in the form of food and palm-wine, either on their graves or to the kanda to which they belong. A nganga of nkisi Kula who wishes to catch bankuyu is most likely to succeed if he puts out some scorched meat; its smell overcomes the caution of the bankuyu. Ripe bananas and overripe tiba bananas, the cherished food of the bankuyu, are also put on their graves. When they have eaten these offerings, their wrath subsides.

The basimbi too, receive sacrifices, especially at water crossings which they frequent. These sacrifices are hallowed by spitting and prayers for success are made before they are thrown into the water. They usually consist of leaves or grass, sometimes a few chicken feathers symbolizing a hen. In cases of illness, beans, peanuts, handsome leaves of edible plants, down of beautiful hens or beautiful spotted cloth, as advised by the nganga, are thrown into the water to appease the basimbi. Parents of twins sacrifice varying batches of blue beads or two feathers of a white hen to the basimbi.

Most sacrifices are made to the bakisi, in gratitude for cures and to propitiate and honour them, so that they will bring the donor happiness and prosperity.

When certain bakisi, Mpodi, for instance, are assembled, sacrifices are solicited. A small excavation is made in a frequented road and surrounded by a small lusaba enclosure. All passers-by except banganga are expected to sacrifice a cupful of gunpowder. During treatment of the sick, the head of the sculpture is dipped in blood or it is given a drink of blood. When drinking palm-wine, its nganga should let some of the wine drip on the image.

Sacrifices are made to bakisi, whether they have images or not. Women sacrifice agricultural products, such as maize grains, peanuts, beans and palm-kernels or else blue beads or a strip of cloth. This is put into the nkisi bundle. Men may give a leg of game, or drops of blood from the comb or neck of a sacrificed cock.

When a major nkisi is "raised" (consecrated anew) or if it is to investigate a serious case of fraud, appeasing sacrifices are made, consisting of a pig, four or five hens, five to six bundles of cloth, three to four batches of blue beads, etc.

When bandoki are hunted in cases of illness, hens are usually sacrificed directly to Nkondi and other minkisi. Sometimes, hens may be sacrificed on a stone by the wayside. The stone

is covered by the top shoots of a palm, supported by palm branches put into the ground, with the leaves pointing downward. The head, legs, and wings of the hen are after the offering suspended from this canopy in the hope that the ndoki responsible for the illness will touch this medicine and catch a fatal disease. The hen may also be sacrificed and hung up in the same way by the house of the sufferer, to prevent the bandoki from entering it.

The ancestral nkisi Lemba does not receive any gifts or sacrifices. On the contrary, its nganga is obliged to give a present to a cured patient. Hence it is called a "remarkable" nkisi.



*Fig. 32. Sculpture of an ancestor, Bemba in Kolo (Laman 530).*

## Shrines

Huts for the *minkisi* are erected some distance from other habitations. Only *banganga* may enter these *nkisi* huts. No one is allowed to turn his seat on such a hut. In a few places there are some huts where women have no admittance. There are other huts where every passer-by must leave *nkolumuna* leaves. Everyone entering a *nkisi* hut, must first of all salute and honour the *nkisi* by clapping his hands "zu-zu-zu". Sometimes they must first rub their hands against the ground, stroke their temples and clap hands before the *nganga* is allowed to take the *nkisi* and carry it to its mat.

*Nkisi* huts are not very common. The one belonging to *nkisi* *Kipeeka* is built in the same way as other huts. In the inner part of the house, against the back wall is the place where the *nkisi* lives. The floor of the hut must always be kept clean. Only the initiated may enter it. No palm-wine or gun may be kept there, nor may anything be thrown into the hut, as it is the residence of *nkisi* *Kipeeka*.

Huts devoted to the ancestors are found further inland. They are built from grass or mud, and in more recent days, they have an earthen floor. They are kept scrupulously clean and are often devoid of any furnishings except for a mug with a hole in the bottom, into which the daily libation of palm-wine is poured. Some of these huts contain an ancestral image made from cloth or wood. In the dwellings there is sometimes a sacred corner where the head of the house sacrifices palm-wine and other offerings to the ancestors.

The most important shrines are the graves and dynastic burial grounds where great chiefs have been buried. They are kept in perfect condition and nobody is allowed to clear this land.

Water pools that have yielded a *nkisi* are sacred. Only the *banganga* of such *bakisi* may bathe there. Flowers and other things growing there are sacred. Mountains and other places where religious rites are performed are sacred. Such a mountain is *Nlemba* where the *bankimba* are resurrected. Only initiated *bankimba* may set their foot on it.

Some woods and groves, especially in the southern parts of the country near the coast, are sacred. One of them is *Mbena* wood. No childless woman may enter it, but it is frequented by firstborn children. They place an offering of kola nuts in termite hills and are rubbed with termite soil. Those who come to the wood to clean the shrine, bring palm-wine and call their own names. Arriving at the shrine, they seat themselves with crossed

legs and say: "We mothers have come to join you fathers in the enclosure to clean for you. We have not come with empty hands, there is the palm-wine jug that we brought into the place." They may pour out a large calabash of palm-wine on the graves. These are also called nzo a nzambi, i.e. the house of the great minkisi, referring primarily to Mpanzu and Nkondi.

The caves or other localities where the ruler is tested and acknowledged by the ancestors dwelling there, are also sacred. Some of these caves, especially the large ones, housed the first immigrants. They have been taken over by basimbi and ancestral spirits and are considered very sacred by the tribe they belong to. Tales about such caves, mountains, woods, groves and pools have been handed down from generation to generation.



*Fig. 33. Head of a nyombo, Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 1424).*

## CHAPTER XIX

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### Prohibitions

Prohibitions (nlongo, sacred) are the same as laws (miina) for the preservation of the body, and are intended to preserve the health of the people or of animals.

Banganga want things to be forbidden so that their minkisi may be invoked and used if the prohibition is contravened, for in this way the nganga acquires possessions. A person who has failed to observe the prohibition and fallen ill must send for the nganga in order to be cured.

If the sick person has been treated the nganga lays down several prohibitions for him so that he may remain healthy.

Others say that the prohibitions have existed from the days of Nangudi a Kongo, from the beginning, and have since been preserved by successive generations for the sake of their own welfare.

The laws and regulations laid down by the chief have sometimes the form of prohibitions. The laws, however, are stronger, and offenders are punished severely, even with death, whereas those failing to observe prohibitions are punished with sickness, bad luck and misfortunes. These are remedied through treatment by banganga.

Kandu means of protection are considered to be on a par with prohibitions, for if they are not respected they, too, entail sickness and suffering that can be cured only by a nganga.

Konko commandments for a kanda, nzo or individual are not prohibitions, but customs, e.g. not to eat, touch or make a particular thing; a konko rule is considered to be something good, as for instance the rule against marrying a sister, i.e. a woman in the same kanda, for the parties would then become afflicted with leprosy. Such a person can never be a free man in the kanda, but is regarded as a slave.

All who have failed to observe a prohibition are punished in the one way or the other. The nkisi whose prohibition has been contravened persecutes the culprit with dreams, sicknesses and other misfortunes. If he has been treated with several minkisi and contravened their laws they all take their revenge. On the other hand, one who lives in accordance with nkisi's laws will enjoy prosperity, happiness and a long life. If, however, such a patient should desire to be freed from the prohibitions, the nganga may give him to eat of what is forbidden. If, for example, a woman wants to be freed from her prohibitions, she must go to swiftly running water and, clad in little strips of cloth, stand on the bank with her



legs astride, whereupon the nganga strikes her body with a leafy branch. If the nkisi with which she is treated has been composed to the accompaniment of beating on the drum, then a drum must also be beaten on the bank of the stream. When the nganga has struck her with the twigs the woman takes off her strips of cloth and throws them in the water. As they are carried away by the current the prohibitions, too, disappear for good.

If a wife of Nsondi's nganga dies she may be exempted from the nkisi prohibitions. They cut off her nails and the hair on the body and put them on malemba-lemba herbs in the kaleeki-tree (which does not sleep). Ants are then placed on them and the tree is shaken. All the prohibitions then remain on the latter. Others may go to the river and shake off the prohibitions there.

In a foreign country it is not necessary to be so meticulous about the prohibitions, for nkisi knows that there one may be in a quandary and be obliged to eat forbidden things. One may take a dead ember between the big toes and spit, and nkisi will then be aware of the quandary. One then tramples the food that is to be eaten and the prohibition is annulled.

Prohibitions are laid down in connection with things that are not beneficial for the body. Thus pork, for example, is forbidden for many people, as they become feverish and get the ague when they eat it. The nganga explains that they must not eat this or that, as his nkisi has forbidden this, and if they obey his instructions in the matter they will remain healthy.

Kandu and konko prohibitions may become absolute prohibitions, especially if some incident has given rise to misfortune and ruin. The chief or mother of the kanda may then impose kandu-prohibitions on the whole kanda, to the effect that they must never act in this or the other way. The natives believe that basimbi, bandoki, or those who have been a long time dead have heard the kandu-prohibitions and therefore take revenge on those who do not observe them. If they obey the kandu-laws they may get animals and other possessions that belonged to their forefathers.

Kandu and konko prohibitions cannot be removed as can prohibitions to eat certain foods. Kandu is often an agreement, a promise or a regulation that a moribund father, for example, may impose on his children. If they do not act in accordance with the agreement etc. he may feel this in his grave, and punish them.

Customs and marks of respect that are not observed before parents-in-law are called faults of shame. They are not generally prosecuted; instead, the culprit fires a shot to show that he intends to make a propitiatory gift. There are many other such faults of shame before men and women, but they are not referred to as prohibitions.

Prohibitions derive from minkisi, firstly in order to give strength to the latter, that they may be honoured and that homage be paid them, and secondly so that those who observe the prohibitions may retain their health.

Protective agents against theft, adultery and other unworthy actions are often set up which through nkisi it is forbidden to touch or to slight. Offenders are punished in the same way as those who fail to observe other prohibitions associated with nkisi.

A number of prohibitions are rescinded if they are all too difficult to observe, whether on a journey in a strange country or at home. If, for example, a father has caught a fish, a rat or some other dainty morsel he would according to his nkisi's prohibitions not be allowed to share this with anyone.

If when in a strange country a person had failed to observe the prohibitions he might, on his return home, make amends by drinking a medicine. In the sequel he had then to live in accordance with the prohibitions in question.

Prohibitions are also observed when crossing the Congo River. They say: "Puli, may all epidemics remain here". The traveller then takes water in his mouth and sprays it upwards and downwards and the prohibition has been suspended. He may now eat with others.

Nkisi Kiyala's nganga may not eat meat in "fresh blood" or eat a cock with another person; nor may he jump over a ditch without first blowing his pipe. If he has shot an animal together with another he should be the first to slit up the game. He is not allowed to eat tiba-bananas or enter a hut for menstruating women.

Nkisi Londa's nganga may not eat kula or kimpele mice, nor may he touch a corpse. When he has returned from the funeral lamentations and enters the nkisi-house he must first cleanse and sanctify himself with lwangu-lwangu or luyangu-yangu herbs, spit on his hands and wipe his head and sides with them. He may not eat anything he has previously despised or refused to eat. He must not enter the burial ground and must always have his cap on when he has drunk palm wine.

A female nganga serving Londa must not let it rain on the zangi carrying band, must not put it in water or give it to anyone who is in the house for menstruating women. She must not let it be touched by anyone who has eaten tiba-bananas or kula mice, nor may she take it with her when she goes to the burial ground or when she goes out in the grass to pay her debt to nature.

It is also forbidden for a child's head-band to come into contact with water. If a child is to undergo treatment, the head-band is first removed.

Anyone who has an infant in arms may not bandage a wound, for then it would only spread and would not heal.

If a pregnant wife is in the house neither her husband nor any other person may sit on the threshold, for then the delivery will be difficult, the threshold-sitter is as it were a hindrance to the bringing forth of the child.

A pregnant wife — and sometimes also her husband — must not eat eggs, for then the children may be bald like the egg, and they will not, moreover, grow quickly.

A child that is born with the help of nkisi Londa may not be bathed in water that someone has refused to fetch. It must not be carried to the burial ground or be shown a corpse. It must not be laid in the shade of nlolo or kyanga trees, for then it will swell like the kyanga. It must not be bathed at the water's edge, for otherwise basimbi will get hold of it. Water must be fetched with a nkalu-calabash, which must not be filled to the top, for in this case the child's life will be full, i.e. it will die. Nor, for the rest, may a calabash be shown

before a corpse, for then the child dies. It may not eat the kimpele mouse, which breathes very rapidly: twe-twe-twe; nor may it be taken out to a grass fire until the nganga has first shown this to the child. Similarly, it must not be taken to the market until the nganga or a father of twins has first shown it round the market.

The child may not eat roasted potatoes or be present when they are being roasted, as it would in this case get weeping sores and rashes. The same prohibitions apply for Londa amulets as for the child.

After the birth of a child a husband and wife may not have sexual intercourse until the nganga has given his permission. Sometimes this is not given until the child is able to walk.

When a patient has been treated by the nganga and is aware of the prohibitions he must never call for the nganga and ask him if this or that is forbidden or not, otherwise the same thing may happen as when someone called the nganga and said: "Say, is the mbende-mouse forbidden?" The nganga answered: "Yes, sure! I had forgotten that". And this animal therefore became forbidden for them. The same thing once happened with regard to the goat, when they asked if it was not forbidden. "Yes, of course!" said the nganga, "I had forgotten that".

To carry a pregnant goat is forbidden by several minkisi. It is also forbidden to kill hyaenajackals (minzi), since they hunt like dogs and pursue human beings.

The lusaba or lunsangu enclosure is forbidden to all outsiders and for animals. Thus if an animal does get in it is killed and the blood poured over nkisi. If some unauthorized person has entered the enclosure he must sanctify himself by drawing chalk lines at the corners of his eyes and on his brow.

Fire must not be taken out of the house of one who has just given birth, as otherwise the child will cry bitterly.

A courtyard must not be swept on nkenge and nsona days. Anyone sweeping on these days becomes insane.

Kelwa-seed must not be pounded for nkisi Nsonde.

The last of the maize must not be roasted for Nsonde. If this is done the village must be purified; otherwise the inhabitants will become crazy.

For several minkisi there is a rule to the effect that no-one may drink standing.

Wood must not be carried tied in bundles. If this is done, the woman who has carried the wood must tramp on it when she puts it on the ground, as otherwise one of her domestic animals will be hunted by a wild beast or a python.

Pepper and kindungwa must not be ground at night. This prohibition holds for several nkiduku-minkisi.

No-one must step into or drink water that has stood over-night. Nor may water be drunk through a straw, for in this case diarrhoea will result.

No-one may strike the ground with his hand when angry. It is forbidden to weep when reclining; one who does so will get swellings all over his body.

Children born through nkisi Nzau may not be carried on the head or on the back; their mothers may not tramp on the seeds of tree-melons or on the waste from sugar-cane.

The mother may not eat coarse salt or listen to the southing of the wind in bunches of bananas and the melon-tree, for then her milk will be curdled and the baby will get ill. Nor may she lift fire-brands in the night. For nkisi Ntaka it is forbidden to cut bananas into pieces and to scrape them. It is also forbidden to lick out a pot, ladle or mortar.

Nkisi Nsonde's nganga may not eat or drink alone. He must have a boy at his side or else thrust a knife into the ground at his side to symbolize a boy. If the nganga eats alone he is a thief, or otherwise he becomes insane.

One must not see a mirror or anything that spins, or one will be overtaken with vertigo or epilepsy.

Lwemba's and Lumoni's banganga may not mix and eat poultry and ngola-fish with one who has not given birth to children, for if he does he will become ill.

The dog is forbidden for nkisi Nsakulu, since it is included in a medicine that counteracts the desire of a lustful wife for her husband.

The nlwangu-frog is a constituent part in several minkisi and is forbidden. If the frog should be eaten, the "heart" will tend to blurt "anything at all" — i.e. will become garrulous — and the person who eats the frog will get thin; his body will get small and he will develop long legs like a frog. The frog foretells rain when it croaks loudly.

The sidi-frog is forbidden for nkisi Bisimbi and others, as it is thought to bore holes in teeth and to cause tooth-ache. A hearth at which sidi has been roasted must not be trodden on or even touched; this is forbidden by nkisi Mbola.

The cat is not forbidden, but if anyone eats its meat or cat-soup and coughs, he immediately gets the luhuumi-sickness (the purring) of the cat, which causes the death of the person. The cat is otherwise an animal that is held in high honour. Anyone who kills a cat must pay an annual fine; as the proverb says: "A lawsuit about a cat never ends". A cat-killer must, in fact, pay for the property eaten by rats.

The tree-frog (nanamana mabeene, that clings to the breast) is not forbidden, but if it should cling to a woman's breasts they will never be warm again. It also foretells the rainy season, for then it begins to croak.

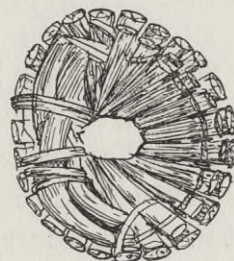
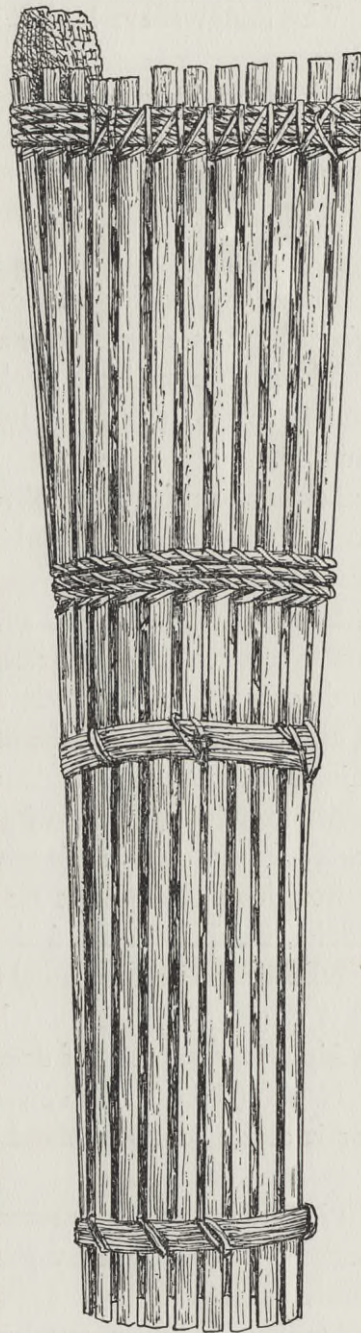


Fig. 34. Fish-buck (*duba kiambuna*), Sundi in Lolo (*Laman 272*).

The mingwanzya-bird is forbidden for pregnant women, lest they should shriek as it does.

The nkumbi-animal is forbidden for nkisi Mayiza and others, for it forms one of the ingredients in this nkisi's medicine. If nkumbi is eaten it causes swollen legs and arms and gives rise to sores.

A nkimba (layman) may not see the legs of the maono-frog, or he will fall ill and develop small sores.

Many minkisi forbid pigs, and no woman is allowed to eat goat's meat until she has given birth to a child. This applies for nkisi Nsulu and others.

The grub munkituka nyoka (that is converted to a snake) is considered to be venomous and is able to transform itself into the snake kimbadya, which is forbidden for several minkisi.

Mumfuku-mfuku (an olive-green grasshopper) has a strong smell, as appears from the name. It is forbidden for nkisi Mpungu, for it causes diarrhoea. The grasshopper munsyoka resembles the snake munyoka and is forbidden for nkisi Mpumbu. It causes diarrhoea.

Nsekisa (a grasshopper) and other grasshoppers included in nkisi Mpumbu are forbidden for anyone undergoing treatment by this nkisi. They cause diarrhoea and take away the understanding and so forth. The name derives from the chirping: ce-ce-ce.

Nzenze (a cricket in the soil) is eaten by women and boys, but it is forbidden by some minkisi and gives rise to diarrhoea.

Mpumbulu (a family of grasshoppers) is likewise eaten by women and boys, but it is forbidden for the nkisi family Nsakula.

Buffalos and elephants are forbidden by several minkisi.

The mafundi-grub is forbidden by nkisi Nsazi.

Nkabi or mvudi (an antelope) is forbidden by several minkisi, and above all for women, as it causes a ringworm rash (kisampala). In other places nkabi is eaten. When it barks at night it is an omen of death.

Nzobo (civet, *Viverra civetta*) is also the name of a nkisi. It is forbidden for nkisi Nzobo, for it causes tooth-ache and rashes. It is also said to zabula mabuta, make a hole in, i.e. terminate, pregnancy.

Pigs are forbidden by several minkisi, for they cause swollen bellies and swelling in other parts of the body. Many people are afraid of pigs, as little children fall ill and die if the mother eats pork.

Ngola mamba (an otter) is forbidden for mothers, who drink a medicine in which the otter is an ingredient in order to get fresh milk.

Bongo is a forbidden water. Anyone drinking it will urinate painfully and have to be treated by Kinzyokoto. It is also called "the water that whole brothers may not drink". One may drink on one occasion, but not the other. If both drink, one dies.

Nyundu-stones (iron-containing) are so-called because Simbi's banganga do not eat at ordinary fire-place stones (so-called makukwa), or their legs would swell up. They are forbidden. If anyone meets nganga Volo and he asks: "What are you carrying?" the answer

must be "Rupture". If anyone had said stones, he would have become ill. If a person throws or drops such a stone, those present must jump up and wave their arms lest they develop a hernia.

Mbonda's dam is forbidden, for a simbi has been taken there. Bankimba bathe in it on the day they break camp. For this reason it is called Mbonda's dam. There are forbidden woods, as for instance the one in which the laughing spring is to be found. If anyone plants maize there on one day, it will be ripe on the following day.

One may not place the posts of the kyanga-shelf on the bed, for in this case one's wife's legs will swell. This is the law for nkisi Nsumbu.

If a person covers a sore with copper scraped from a copper ring, he must give it to nganga to be sanctified, so that the sore will not become larger. If the nganga is refused payment he warms his hands at the fire before covering the sore, and the latter then becomes much larger.

Children are forbidden to touch one another's navel or play with it, for then it will soon rot. Minkumba's nganga heals it by placing charred mwinga-grass on it.

It is forbidden to strike anyone with a stalk of dyadya-grass, as the person struck will become very thin according to the laws for nkisi Mpumbu-su. When the latter is composed, stalks of dyadya-grass are put in it. Anyone who is struck with dyadya must bite it and spit on the ground.

Speaking generally, one may say that a person contravening a nkisi, nganga or other prohibition becomes unclean, falls ill or is punished in some other way. He must therefore be treated in different ways to become clean again.

If anyone is to go on a long journey he must take ash from his own hearth to the country to which he is going. He must put some of the ash at the fire-side in every house he enters, as in this case nothing that is prepared there is forbidden for him to eat, even if it should be forbidden in his home country.

## Kandu — Konko

Apart from nlongo, there are prohibitions called kandu. These may constitute various protective measures for fruit-trees, palms and fields etc. against thieves and other evil-doers. If the latter disregard the prohibitions they will be punished through the power of the nkisi concealed in the kandu regulation.

But kandu may also be a curse that is pronounced on a son or daughter failing to honour the father and give him his dues.

Such kandu may also be given for those belonging to the kanda, e.g. if a person fails to honour his chief and obey his commands. In connection with a kandu of this kind an evil-doer may, for the rest, be deprived of his right of inheritance.

Konko is a commandment or a prohibition which the head-men of different makanda or mvila have laid down when, for example, they have seen that a certain dish or certain customs have not been good for their relatives. If, on the other hand, something has been particularly good they have recommended this. A konko-commandment may be reinforced if while swearing an oath the chief hammers an iron wedge into nkisi Nkondi. Those contravening a konko rule are punished with the unpleasantnesses, illnesses and other misfortunes that are caused by the contravention.

A person sowing pumpkin-seed must thus first wash his hands and his mouth, otherwise the pumpkins will be rotten.

When bananas are being planted the top of the shoot must first be turned downwards when the hole has been dug; it is then planted in the right way and earth packed round it. If this is not done the shoot will not bear any fruit.

A person tapping palm wine may not whistle when up in the palm-tree, for then the palm wine will whistle and stop flowing. When the tapper removes his ntumbu-calabash he must not turn the mouth upwards, for then the wind is set in motion and, when it murmurs, the palm wine is also set in motion. The calabash must be turned upside down. Nor may the tapper drink palm wine up in the tree or answer when he is hailed there. If he disregards these rules the palm grove must be cleansed.

A person carving madibu (wooden bells) must not blow in the bell, for then it will have a dull sound (bobolo-bobolo). The wood that is cut out must be shaken off; if it is blown out with the mouth the bell will be no good.

One must not rest one's gun against a banana, for then it will misfire or else miss the

game. The gun may not be leaned against the mumpala mbaki-tree, for then the bullet will ricochet.

Among the Kimbedi no men with pregnant wives may eat chicken or eggs, otherwise the foetus and the child will get feathers on its face or elsewhere. The mbende-rat is also forbidden among the Kimbedi.

A girl may not play with the carrying band over her breast, for if this should be torn or ripped apart she will give birth to children that will die one after the other.

A woman may not wash her hands in the dew, as this leads to child mortality. Nor may she wash them in rain-water from the roof, for then she cannot hold the child firmly to her breast.

The prohibition against sitting on a hoe-handle does not derive from any nkisi. If one person sees another sitting on a hoe-handle he immediately urges him to get up, as otherwise the sitter may become thin and knotty like the handle, for in the old days it was thought that food comes from the hoe-handle because the hoe is used to hoe the fields. When there is a scarcity of food the natives of course get thin and resemble a hoe-handle.

The carrying band (nkole) with which the women carry their mpidi-baskets is considered to have great power. Boys may not tramp on it or use it to hit one another, or they may lose the power to beget children.

If a married woman has been unfaithful she must lay the carrying band across the threshold, for when the husband steps over it the infidelity is cancelled and he will not develop the mpinga-illness which otherwise afflicts one whose wife has been unfaithful.

In some tracts no-one may sit on a banana trunk, because, as the banana trunk rots so quickly, this is considered to cause mortality among children.

A married woman must not put two pots on the fire, as in this case she will give birth to twins.

When a mother has taken her little child out of the house and is going somewhere she must little by little take a bit of earth from the sole of her feet and give to the child to smell and taste, and must smear a little of it on the child's forehead. If she neglects this precaution the child may, when it gets home, begin to cry because it has gone a "strange" way.

If they go to the market, the mother must take earth from here and do the same thing, so that the child shall not cry when it sees the strange market scene.

If they go past a burial mound they quicken their steps, and the mother says: "War, war, war! We flee!" so that the child shall not feel like crying.

If mother and child get caught in the rain on the plains the mother must place three leaves from the nlolo-tree on the crown of the child's head, for the fontanelles are not strong enough for drops to fall on them. When they get home they must not enter the house immediately, but must first stand outside by the longer of the walls flanking the door and say: "War, war, war! We have come flying!" Then they enter. Once inside, they may not sit down straight away, but must first stand at the door-post and say: "This is a shed and not a house, but because of the war we have come flying. We have come and entered here". All this is done lest the child should weep incessantly and fall ill.



A mother may not weep when she has an infant, for this has the same consequence as the snapping of the child's carrying band.

A pregnant woman may not enter a house in which there is a corpse, for the foetus may be adversely affected from having seen the shadow of the corpse. After the birth, neither the child nor the mother may see a dead person, as the child would otherwise fall ill.

If milk falls on a young infant it cannot keep warm in the evening if the milk is not licked off; the body will become damp (cold) as a banana trunk.

If masoka palm wine is spilled on a boy and his penis is not licked, he will not be able to beget children when he grows up and marries. If excrement falls on the chest of a big child, boils and swellings will arise.

A child must not be bathed with rain-water, as this would result in water-blisters on the toes. A bath-pot in which a girl has been bathed may not be used for a boy, for the latter would then not have a strong body. When a child is still at the crawling stage fresh (green) palm-nuts must not fall on its hips, as it will in this case not soon get strong legs. The parents may not cut their finger-nails while the child is still an infant; otherwise the child will not honour them when it grows up.

When the natives dress in raffia or any other cloth this may not be mended while worn round the waist, for then poverty would be "mended" and the wearer would never get any possessions. Anyone mending cloth at the hip is thus binding poverty to his or her own body. No harm is done, on the other hand, if the cloth is taken off while it is mended, the implication here being that one takes off poverty.

Another explanation of this custom is that child mortality increases if it is not observed.

When a house is newly built it is necessary, according to the tradition in some tracts, for the one who is to light the first fire in it to take a fire-brand round the roof to show where the smoke must issue. If this rule is neglected, fires will be very smoky in that house when the owners move in.

No rules are laid down for the forming of clay vessels, but for the excavating of the potter's clay and the firing of the vessels there are special regulations which must be observed. A menstruating woman is thus forbidden to go into the hole from which the clay has been dug, as it would then collapse. Nor may one break wind behind in such a hole.

When the vessels have been shaped and are dry and ready for firing, a man with a pregnant wife may not approach, or they will all crack. If the man has been in a "bad house" (coitus) they will be broken to pieces.

If a wife hits her husband with a broom he has been swept, and his "loin dies". He is thus unable to beget children.

Two men, two women, or children and old people may not urinate together, for the one who dies first will in this case come and seek the other to take him also to the grave. Thus those who urinate together pool their duration of life.

One must not sow calabash seed if one has just been drinking water, otherwise the calabashes will soon rot. One may not sit down when sowing peanuts, for then they will be undeveloped or stunted.

Neither man nor boy may step over a woman's legs, as she will in this case not be able to give birth. Nor may a woman step over a man's legs, or he will be unable to beget children. Thus if a man has stepped over a woman's legs and a woman over a man's, both must immediately step back. To step over another's legs is tantamount to stepping over another's capacity to give birth or beget. One who does this is sued, and the suit will be the same as for fornication.

A pregnant woman may not eat matutu-rats or step over a pit that has been dug for them. The child would then get two fontanelles, one at the nape of the neck and one on the crown of the head, for matutu-rats have two openings to their burrows, one by which they enter and another by which they escape when the natives are trying to dig them up.

If a child has evacuated its bowels in the dark the mother must not go out and throw away the excrement, for bandoki and bankuyu are at large in the darkness.

If a pregnant woman is lying sleeping in the sun she must not be woken up in such a way as to startle her, as the foetus may change position and perhaps get a blemish. The natives believe that the foetus makes itself in the sunshine when the mother is lying down sleeping.

When a woman is planting manioc at new moon she must put a stalk of mwinga-grass round her hips, otherwise the manioc will be no good, it will be nothing but roots.

If manioc is planted at full moon the root will be short. When the moon is on the wane, on the other hand, the root becomes long and good. Banana-trees do not get many bunches when the moon is waning, but they become big and long-stemmed. It is also best to castrate a boar when the moon is on the wane.

No-one going hunting should take meat with him in his nkutu-bag, for then it will be almost impossible to shoot any game. It is the deceased ancestors that control the beasts, and when they see that the villagers need meat they send animals in their way. But if they have meat with them, they get nothing, for this means that they are not in need of meat but only want to increase their supplies.

A man may not carry a mpidi-basket by the carrying band as do the women, or he will soon be the defendant in a lawsuit.

A woman staying in a house for menstruating must not plant manioc, for it will be no good. Nor may she pass the tobacco plantation of another, or this, too, will be adversely affected — the tobacco will have a pungent taste. She may not, either, enter a house in which there is a nkisi, for a menstruating woman is unclean.

A man must not plant sugar-cane if he has slept in a "bad house", for the resulting canes will not be sweet. Nor may he sow tobacco seed.

A man must not whet his knife in the dark, or he will sleep badly.

No-one must take out new possessions, cloth, blankets and the like, in the dark (i.e. in the evening), for then he will have bad dreams, bad luck and unhappiness. Possessions must be taken out in daylight.

If a woman has been given cuttings of manioc by another woman and pays her nothing for the gift, then the former owner of the cuttings can just twist her nipple and there will be no manioc, only branches.

## Appeasing Names for Animals and Animal Traditions

So-called gentle or appeasing names are used to designate beasts of prey lest their ferocious character be aroused. Such names are also given by hunters to other animals so that they may remain undisturbed and thus become an easy prey.

The mayimbi bird is called a splendid bird, because it wreaks vengeance upon anyone who wrongs his neighbour. It has been given the name: "He who neither breaks the family ties nor ties the luyanga grass together". It is also called malembe (the peaceful one). The ngembo bat is called "the claw of ngembo" (to hold on to), or "the hanging one". The kingfisher and the sea eagle are both called matekila (the first to arrive) or mpengo (aside). The mboma snake is called bisansu (the educator). The mubaku mongoose is known as "the snorter of steamlike breath" (miisi) or as "he who advances slowly" (mayulumuka). The nsengi monkey is called mimengo (the playful, jesting one). The mbala cat is addressed as mumfongona tolo (the snorer). The kinkanda sloth-monkey is called kafwe mu mingodi (he who does not die from strangulation), or makakitina. Luka (lukaya) kwa mamba, meaning "the leaf on the water" is the name of a snake, also known as matombuka (the riser). The leopard is described by several names, such as kumbu or kimfumba (the snarler), makwenzi (he who bites, devours), and manzala (the one with claws).

When someone has killed a leopard, he is not allowed to use any of these names, but must say instead: "The lord of the country (the chief) sleeps for ever (is dead)". If the leopard hears its own name it attacks its killer. Hence the animal may be skinned and cut up only after it has been covered with blankets, with the phrase "the chief of the country is covered with blankets".

The mbambi antelope is addressed as kinkakala (a lizard) if it attempts to escape its hunters. As the antelope is ashamed of this name it is angered and does not take flight.

The ntanta fish is addressed with ndebongo (from leba, reprove, become peaceful) when it is caught, to induce it to retract its spearlike spines that are poisonous as snake teeth. The locust mfumbulu is pursued with the words "nsoni kanga" (be not ashamed) until it is caught. If the buffalo is addressed as nkombo (goat), it does not become enraged and pursue its hunters, but just keeps retreating, however many bullets may hit it.

The hen is called bidumuka (the hopper).

The bandoki often send mosquitoes to torment people, as a precursor of nightmares. Swarms of mosquitoes in a village forebode a death.

A species of centipede called ngongolo is considered poisonous and a deathly potion can be concocted by putting its legs in palm-wine. He who drinks it will be afflicted with a swollen abdomen and die. In some parts of the Congo it is used as a medicine in nkisi. If somebody dreams of a centipede walking over his body, sores will develop. "The stick that is thrown is the centipede" is a saying that implies a wish to confer upon certain matters without divulging all one's thoughts.

Swaka mayaka (to wash manioc), a small frog with long, thin legs that has derived its name from the sound it makes: "swaka-swaka", heralds the approach of the sivu season by its loud croaking. It is not used in nkisi. Makunzu is a small insect that buzzes: whu-whu. Swarms of these insects predict an abundance of fish and mushrooms. They are not used in nkisi either.

The mollusc nkodya itself is not used for anything, but its shell (kodya) has a function in many nkisi, either as a cup to drink medicine from or as a container for medicine or pepper. A child that dribbles much has a shell fastened round its chin, conveying that the child resembles the shell by its frothing.

Mbulu, the jackal, is the animal of the bandoki; it forebodes death. In certain parts of the Congo it is eaten, but elsewhere its meat is eschewed because of its resemblance to the dog.

The chameleon (lungwenya) is considered inedible and is not often used in nkisi. It is believed that a person breathed upon by a chameleon will become as thin as the animal, but he may ward off this danger if he in his turn blows on the animal, saying: "Chameleon, stay thin, I intend to keep my health". Someone suffering from trembling hands can cure his affliction by touching a chameleon.

Head lice (nginya) betoken good fortune and a great number of them signify an abundance of worldly goods. Clothes lice, on the other hand, have no special significance.

Kwinini and mvuka or ntuka (butterfly larvæ) are not used in bakisi. Both types are sometimes eaten by women and children, the latter type is also eaten by men in those parts of the Congo, where all kinds of butterfly larvae are considered fit for eating.

Mongo is an immense, legendary fish that used to live in the Kwilu tributary. It grew and grew until it stretched across the Kwilu. Then it proceeded into the Congo where it continued to grow until it stretched across that river with its head resting on one bank and its tail on the opposite bank. Then it made its way into the ocean.

The langu has a bulbous root strewn with small bulbs. It is white inside and very juicy, with a bitter taste. The crushed root is put into pools to poison the fish, which die within a short time and rot quickly. The stomach is removed immediately because of the poison. The langu can also be used to poison one's fellow men.

The nkongila (a lizard that darts swiftly through the grass) is not often used in bakisi. It is believed that the nkongila is transformed into a big nkom lizard (the varan) in its old age. There is a saying when somebody is startled: "It is only the nkongila", meaning that nothing dangerous has happened yet but that it must be taken as a portent. One had better be prudent and cautious, because even if it was only the nkongila running away, it might have been a snake or some other dangerous animal.

The fwekele, a shaggy rat, is not formally prohibited, but pregnant women should not eat it as the baby might be born with a body as hairy as the rat's. It is said that the fwekele, when it becomes very old, is transformed into a chameleon. The tutu (another rat) is considered a delicacy by both men and women. Pregnant women, however, must abstain from it as the baby might otherwise be born, like the rat, with two fontanel, one on the crown and one on the back of the head. The kimpele or kimbwa (a grey rat) is a choice food, since it is very plump and tasty. Another, very big rat, called nkusu or vulumba, is not used in nkisi and there is no prohibition on eating it. The nkusu is said to transform itself into the nkwete (=nduutu) rodent.

The lombo, a green locust, is eaten by children. Black locusts, on the other hand, are considered unfit for human consumption. The worm (lusalu) is used as fish bait. Its presence in the road predicts rain.

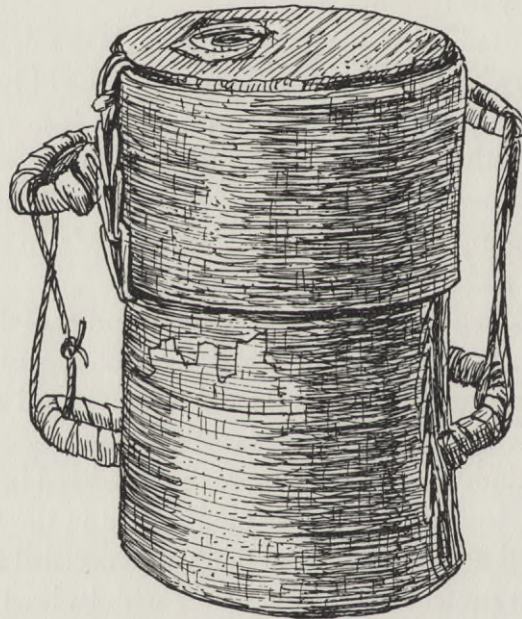


Fig. 35. Box (batalu), Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 481).

## Kinkonko

Traces of totemism, i.e. the belief in a special magic animal proper to each individual, *nzo* or *kanda*, are rarely found. Occasionally, a father may tell his child: "This is your *kinkonko*, take good care of it, do not be too eager to send it out into the villages to steal hens, as it may be killed and then you, too, will die". This is rare, however, and happens only if the father himself has adopted that particular animal as his *kinkonko*. According to popular belief, a *kinkonko* not only possesses special traits, but its master can incorporate its soul (*nsala*) with his own to fortify it and to prolong his life. This is called *bonga kibulu* (to take possession of the power, soul, of an animal) or *bonga kinkonko* (to assume the soul of a *kinkonko* for help and protection). Such an animal may also be called a *kituzi* (a transforming animal), from the verb *kituka* (to be transformed), when its master assumes the shape of the animal before his enemies or dispatches it on all sorts of mischievous errands. All *kinkonko* animals have a special *nkisi* power, i.e. magical power and strength, with the added accomplishment of appearing in dreams to give guidance and help. No guardian animal may be killed by the one who has adopted it as his *kinkonko*. It must be sheltered and given the best possible care.

A *kinkonko* animal may be adopted with the aid of a *nkuyu* spirit or in a similar mysterious way. Another possibility is to manufacture a *nkisi* that has the desired animal as its *kinkonko* and dedicate oneself to this *nkisi*. A child may receive a *kinkonko* at birth through the father's express bequest. A *kinkonko* is adopted in about the same way as *kindoki*. The *kinkonko* do not eat people, however, but defend and protect them. The dedication to a guardian animal may be effected by means of a foliate plant, called *mbwila-mbwila*. The animal that is desired as a *kinkonko* is summoned by hitting one hand with the leaves of the plant. Another common method is to use a part of the animal whose soul one wishes to possess, usually the skin or the head. Incisions are made both on the skin and head of the animal, which represent the live animal, and on its prospective master, in order to effect an exchange of blood between the two. If a live animal can be caught instead, it is incised in a similar manner. This is not feasible with big animals like the buffalo and the elephant, but the *nsengi* monkey, the *kinkanda* sloth-monkey and many other animals, in particular snakes and certain species of fish, are often subjected to this ritual. The incision appears as a Greek cross.

Very often the nganga merely blesses the skin and the head of the animal to be adopted as a kinkonko. Sometimes the skin is carried along as if it were the real kinkonko. This is particularly common with the mubaku in times of war. Sometimes the mubaku is sent ahead of the warriors to lure the enemy, on perceiving the animal, into emptying his guns at it. The mubaku's masters then quickly seize this opportunity to unload their own guns at the enemy. (This practice was especially common in the days of the flint-lock, which could not be very quickly reloaded.)

Another way of acquiring a kinkonko is to enlist the help of someone already possessing it as his guardian animal. This patron summons the animal, whereupon both rub their bodies against that of the novice. They then rub foreheads to signify an exchange of souls, the human soul passing into the kinkonko and vice versa.

If someone has a leopard as his kinkonko, his mwela (breath, life) dwells in the animal. If the leopard dies, its master dies. The death of the master in battle means that the leopard has died in its native woods.

Among the bakisi that possess a kinkonko are Mutadi, with the nsengi monkey, Bunzi with the mboma snake, and Mpodi with the otter, lunsoko-nsoko.

Parents may give their child a kinkonko by making a small incision on both the child and the animal, permitting the blood of the two to mix. This kinkonko may consist of a piece of leopard skin which must be carried along throughout childhood. When the child has grown up and reached the age of discretion, a first festive meal is arranged for the leopard, at which he is regaled with the meat of animals from the plain, occasionally also with meat from the village. This is intended to show the leopard where to go to procure meat for its master.

If the ngola fish is wanted as a kinkonko, the nganga lets the novice's blood run into the mouth of the fish while the blood of the fish is rubbed into the novice's incisions. The fish is then carefully lowered into the water and sprinkled with medicine, and has thereby become a kinkonko. If somebody who has adopted the ngola as his kinkonko should be taken ill, he will recover by taking a bath in this water, unless the disease is a fatal one.

The adoption of a kinkonko brings the soul and life of man and animal into an intimate relationship. The lives of the partners are interdependent. If one dies, the other will soon follow. The animal can be dispatched by its master on all sorts of missions and can be summoned to his assistance if he is in difficulties. There is a proverb saying: "Look at the kinkonko, and you will see your child". No one can heal his kinkonko; it would be tantamount to healing himself. If he hates the child, he hates himself. The kinkonko are dearly loved and held in high esteem by the people. The acquisition of a kinkonko, either through inheritance or by adoption, is considered rash in the extreme, as it borders on kindoki and turning ndoki constitutes one of the most hideous offences against society. It happens now and then that a nganga inherits or adopts a kinkonko, which brings grief and misery to his family, for instance the mpidi snake which carries off the children. Nobody is allowed to change his kinkonko, however. Anyone venturing to do so would surely die.

Some kinkonko animals deserve special mention. The leopard's strength avails to defend

its master and to catch the animals he sends it after. If frequent attacks are made by a leopard on the pigs in a village, the animal is believed to be a kinkonko sent by its master. A nganga is then called in, either to find out who is responsible or to ward off further attacks by means of his nkisi or his own kinkonko, for instance the hyaena-dog which pursues the leopard.

If a hyaena-dog's pursuit forces the leopard to seek refuge high up in some thicket, where it is threatened with starvation, illness will confine its master to his bed, since the two are identical. When the kinkonko's nsala is declining, the master's likewise wastes away. The smell diviner ascertains the cause of the illness, and the nganga calls on Nkondi that he may turn against the master of the jackal-hyaena.

A crocodile kinkonko can be acquired through the witchcraft of the high nganga of nkisi Bunzi when he manufactures the nkisi. When the novice is bathing, a crocodile is summoned to lick its master's legs. The owner of a crocodile kinkonko can escape pursuit by transforming himself into a crocodile and diving into the water.

The mboma snake is a favourite guardian animal with several minkisi. It encircles the nganga on the waterfront as the snake encircles its prey, to show its force and power. Through transference of its power it can be used to cure illnesses due to possession by other powers.

The mayimbi bird (buzzard) possesses the faculty of going without rest, enabling it to watch its prey continuously. The mayimbi rests only after catching a bird. Its eyes are upside-down so that it may watch those rash enough to aim their weapons at it. The altitude of its flight makes it impossible to hit the bird. Because of its cleverness, both in tricking people and in cajoling the bandoki into evil deeds, it is a useful kinkonko for a nkisi.

The kanza snake, usually in pairs of a male and a female, is the guardian animal of the nganga of Mayiza, among others. It comes inside the house and rests on the big nkisi bundle of Mayiza. If somebody attempts to kill the nganga, he is transformed into a kanza snake. The snake is pampered and fed tibia bananas by the nganga. If the snake leaves its master, it means that the latter's soul is declining. He is ill and cries: "Eh, I shall die, my kinkonko escapes me, I shall go where my father and mother went" etc.

The mpidi snake is a dangerous guardian and a nganga with this kinkonko is powerful enough to wipe out an entire luvila. The snake appears in dreams. It wants to look at the children and if it spits its saliva at anyone, this spells swift destruction to the people.

The kinkanda sloth-monkey is believed to protect the interests of anyone who refuses to acknowledge defeat or who clings to life, suffering the agony of death with endurance and great strength. The kinkonko cannot vanquish death, however, because Nzambi Mpungu is stronger. The kinkanda is selected for this guardianship because it is extremely tenacious of life and is hard to kill in a trap.

The nsengi monkey is a popular kinkonko because of its fleetness in escaping; it jumps into the trees and vanishes. If it appears in the dreams of the sick this indicates an escape from death. In wartime and other emergencies, too, the nsengi is a powerful helper, ridding the people of their troubles.

The mubaku (mongoose) is a favourite with warriors, as it is unsurpassed in battle and deflects all enemy shots. It protects the kanda. The nzezi (civet cat) also protects the kanda,



but its power is greater than that of the mubaku because it can take long leaps. This means that in fights its master can make his escape by jumping over everybody. The civet, like other beasts of prey, can be dispatched to steal hens as an act of revenge on the part of its master.

The lunsoko-nsoko (an otter) makes people willing to bathe. It is believed to help people to become sleek and well-fed. It makes the perspiration flow freely from the body, rain or shine; like the otter in the water. To see an otter is considered a good omen.

Mbemba (the sea eagle), sempele (the kingfisher), tumsi, and several other birds are popular guardian animals as they bring good fortune and luck in hunting, by their calls or other warnings to the hunter.

A variety of other creatures can be adopted as kinkonko and form an essential part of some nkisi. They are often adopted so that the nganga may have a quick means of escape when danger threatens, by assuming the shape of the kinkonko. These banganga can also assume other guises, for instance that of a boy covered with sores. When someone with evil intentions seeks the nganga and asks: "Where is the nganga?", the boy answers: "I do not know", scratching himself vigorously.

Some chiefs who adopt binkonko, unite their life with wood bisimbi, so that they after death may live in the woods with them. Their life in the village will be very long.

Among the Bembe and other people it is a practice to capture a nkuyu (the spirit of someone who has died), and incorporate it into a small sculpture that follows the owner wherever he goes and warns him against threatening dangers.

The function of guardian lord of the village and of the kanda is often entrusted to a Mukulu (an old one), i.e. anyone with numerous descendants who is a famous figure in the kanda tales and died a long, long time ago. He watches over the people and with his magic power aids them so they prosper and multiply. Hence the proverb says: "A village that lacks Mukulu, the Recoverer, who builds up the kanda, shall wither away and become a village of women and a haunt for bandoki."

The banganga of Nsungu and of Mbambi, among others, have captured the lightning in the glare of the thunderbolt, so that, when life has come to an end, they may ascend to the sky with the roar of the rain and the thunder, even if it should be in the middle of the dry season. They rise to the sky such as they are. Other banganga are transported to the sky through the kundu of their mothers.

To be without a kinkonko is to invite the contempt of the people.

A man who dies without bequeathing a kinkonko to his child has committed a shameful act and insulted the child, as he has failed to observe custom. A child whose father has died pours palm-wine into the grave lest it be deprived of the father's kinkonko and die. When the father notes the honour thus conferred upon him, he can secretly send the child his kinkonko and other sustenance, unbeknownst to others. Should the child fail to honour his father, on the other hand, he would be chastened in various ways, for instance by cutting himself with his knife, being bitten by the dog, or boxed on the ear. In due time, however, the father will appear in a dream to tell the child the reason for his vengeance. The child

is then ordered to take palm-wine, hens and food to his father's kanda if he wishes to be forgiven and be rid of his wounds. When the child awakes and realizes that it was a dream, he hurries to his father's kanda with palm-wine and food to secure forgiveness, saying: "In a dream I was rebuked by your departed chief, therefore spit on me, that I may recover". The members of the kanda take the palm-wine and the hen and go to the burial ground, where their father has been buried. They sacrifice the hen, let the blood drip onto the grave, and pour the palm-wine on the grave saying: "Laa, my Lord! Let the child prosper again with the aid of the kinkonko you left him, because he has heard your message. Laa my Lord! We clap our hands to tell you what he has brought us. Goats, sheep, ducks, pigs, three raffia cloths, one calabash of palm-wine and a ndongila banana". When their enumeration is finished they take a lump of earth from the grave and rub it all over the child's body, tie kimbanzya round his neck and spit in his hands. The child rejoices, now that they have forgiven him.

A kinkonko can only be transferred to the child of one's own loins.

Those who possess kyungu power can send their kinkonko after fowl and other loot from the village, or to damage the property of their fellow men, the latter practice generally directed at trade goods like cloth and animals. Those who possess kyungu search for fools and inexperienced traders, so that they can use their magic power to make an easy deal. They also seek to destroy (eat) cloth by taking the substance out of it, leaving the moths, rats, and other vermin an easy task. Animals they bewitch so they become lean and dispirited and quickly die. Such practices are often condemned as kindoki and the perpetrator runs the risk of being hit by the magic guns set for bandoki, so that he becomes ill and dies.



Fig. 36. Nkisi Kula, Sundi in Kingoyi (Laman 540).

## Magic

Magic manifests itself in the nkisi cult and in many other ways. Although it quite often borders on kindoki, it is tolerated as long as it keeps short of the bandoki practice of "eating" human beings by magic, so that they fall ill, waste away and die. By "eating" a man's reason (banzi) the bandoki can cause feeble-mindedness.

The expression "eat" (dia) is understood by the people in the sense of "consume, finish", for example, someone has "eaten" his money (consumed it) when he has bought something. The money is finished and not visible anymore. The same happens when someone who has been "eaten" by bandoki dies, he is dead and gone, not visible anymore. When someone dies suddenly, he joins the dead with his nsala soul unimpaired, since he has not been ill.

Those who practice kindoki are called bandoki (from the verb loka, to practice black magic, bewitch). In the old days they were called kundu people, an expression derived from the word kundu (a magic gland which makes it possible to "eat" fellow humans). The kundu appears as a blood-filled gland or a tumour somewhere in the body, usually in the stomach. When a dead ndoki is cut up, it is to secure this kundu. It is possible to have several of these glands, located in various parts of the body.

The kundu is regarded as some sort of living being with a nsala soul, which rules the entire body and forces the person it possesses to "eat" others. It eats without any discrimination. It is said: "Kundu, the evil in the stomach, does not choose whom to eat. It may turn out to be the child, the wife or the husband". It happens as it were against one's own will, the kundu just covets flesh.

The kundu is said to be like the mpeeve (wind or spirit), that flies to and fro to catch things. It cannot be by itself but seeks the company of the bankuyu. They are inseparable. They are as two hands held together with the little fingers intertwined.

Kundu people do not leave their bodies in the same condition as others do when sleep overtakes them. The body appears to be asleep, but the kundu with its nsala has departed from the body to go and ensnare people, to "bind" and eat them. Those who lack kundu really sleep, but the kundu people have left only their outer shell on the bed. Many of those possessed by a kundu are not aware of it, as it is the kundu that goes abroad to eat people, leaving the possessed asleep. What remains of a person after being eaten is like the skin shred by a snake and therefore it is said: "The kundu man has taken the castoff snake skin as his symbol."

If someone has kundu, he and his nsala must die. When he is made to take nkasa poison, the nsala declines and vanishes and then the body dies.

It is very difficult for the banganga to catch kundu people or bandoki, as they may hide anywhere at all and pass into any body or shape. The nsala of someone without kundu cannot leave his body completely to enter another shape, but this is a feat of the ndoki. When the banganga are hunting out a ndoki, they enumerate every imaginable animal, plant, and object, even including the stars and the moon, because should they fail to indicate where the nsala is hidden, they will be unable to cure the victim, who is being eaten. The best chance of unmasking a ndoki is when he appears in a dream to his victim when the latter is ridden by nightmares. There are several other ways in which bandoki may betray themselves. If a suspected ndoki predicts something which comes true, it is a certain sign. Or, he may be marked by his red purulent eyes and an evil-smelling wound that will not heal, as kindoki passed into his body by this wound. Again, he may be lucky in all his undertakings, his shots hit the game, he is a skilful craftsman, amasses rich property, rising above the people.

Sometimes he is ostentatiously praising his neighbours' animals or children, and soon after this they are seen to waste away and die. By contrast, the ndoki may also be envious and stingy, show no respect for others, nor have any compassion for others, even if they are suffering from the most terrible wounds. Parsimony evokes the comment: "Truly, parsimony sits on top of the kundu. But if he sees meat, he just wants to buy and eat. Gluttony sits on top of the kundu." The look and speech, indeed the whole appearance of the ndoki breathes evil. A ndoki may answer somebody who has aroused his anger: "May you fall from the palm-tree. May you become stricken with sleeping sickness or epilepsy". Should his curses come true and the victim dream about him, he will be given nkasa poison straight away.

Kindoki is said to have originated with a very cunning and evil person. It has not evolved directly from nkisi, although some people consecrate themselves both to nkisi and to ndoki. Kindoki takes possession of someone, when he consecrates (vanda) himself to it and eats human flesh. Others say that kindoki derives from the first woman who, when her child died, could not restrain herself and lifted up its shroud. This happened at the same time that Death came to mankind.

There are several ways in which to consecrate oneself a ndoki in order to receive kindoki. If the aspirant meets someone with a deformity, for instance, he may ask how he came by it and if the answer is: "When I was taught to be a ndoki", he may say, "I, too, want kindoki, initiate me as a ndoki". The two then go into the woods, where the ndoki chalks one circle on the ground and one near the eyes. When the novice bends down to look at the ground, he will have a vision of his entire departed kanda, adults as well as children, because the circle has been turned into a mirror. As a price for his initiation, however, he must surrender one of his living relatives, be it his mother, brother, sister or some other relation, whom they must eat together. If the novice loves his relatives and does not want to sacrifice them, he must offer himself. He becomes feeble-minded because the kundu has got him in its

grip. As an alternative he may sacrifice a limb, an arm or a leg, which becomes marred by a wound that never heals, or withers away because the inside has been eaten by bandoki. Those who sacrifice a mother, brother or sister are the banganga of Mbwangi, Mpanzu or Sakusi.

It often happens that a nganga is unable to complete his nkisi until the novice has made a human sacrifice for incorporation with the nkisi, which thereby gains in power.

Others become possessed by kindoki or kundu through visions and miracles in the woods or in the water. Such miraculous signs are, for instance, blood scattered around, snakes, leopards or owls in great numbers, tree trunks and water turning into blood, the apparition of people who died after an illness, a ngola fish with a broken tail that grows, or darkness falling at midday. Anyone who observes such signs can become a ndoki and can even undergo a transformation, with the lower part of his body turning into that of a leopard, a snake, an owl, a fish or some other animal.

Such a consecration gathers all the bandoki together, one more hideous than the other. They surround the novice and one of them says: "Give me!" The novice asks: "Whom shall I give?", and so the ceremony goes on. When the bandoki have completed his initiation into kindoki, wild beasts surround the novice. If he tries to escape they bite him. Unless he bears his family great love, he will surrender his mother, his brother, his sister or his maternal uncle. The one he sacrifices falls ill and dies not long after.

A novice who should try to surrender someone outside his kanda would commit a criminal offence, and risks immediate exposure by the smell diviner, and, following that, execution. This is why the bandoki surrender their own kin, so they may have a long life.

At the consecration, leaves of mwamba, ntunu and munsabi-nsabi play a part. Mwamba leaves are cut up to enable the ndoki to bewitch the crop in someone else's field while his own fields yield abundant crops. Ntunu leaves (tunuka, deny) are used to give him the power, when interrogated, to deny that he is a ndoki or has set nightmares upon someone.

Leaves of munsabi-nsabi are used so that one ndoki may be able to defend another by saying: "Nsabi-nsabi, I know nothing, he is no ndoki". Nobody confesses before he has taken nkasa.

It also happens that the bankuyu try to introduce people they meet in the woods to kindoki. If someone accepts, he gives one of his kin. The nkuyu then comes by night and throws a noose around the neck of the victim, who cries out violently in his sleep. In the morning he relates what he has seen and suffered.

Some people may find kindoki as the nganga finds his nkisi, that is by having blood appear instead of the water, firewood or peanuts they have gone to fetch. If someone refuses, the bandoki can threaten him by producing the kanza or mpidi snake or wild beasts. If he accepts, he is dosed with the strong nkadi (denying) medicine. When he has swallowed it, it is changed into a kundu gland, which hardens his heart so that he will never admit to being a ndoki.

Any youth who happens to lick human blood may turn into a ndoki. He will not realize this immediately, but when he has grown up he will feel an urge to be initiated as a ndoki.

Kundu can also be received in the woods, by a ndoki stone. There are three kinds of kundu: The first type is characterized by a craving for human flesh, the second by a craving for worldly goods, and the third by a craving for sensual pleasures. The first is located just below the heart, the second below the lungs and the third near the groin.

When a ndoki is walking with someone, he may call forth a swarm of bees that attack his companion. The ndoki then says: "Give me, and I will recall my warriors". If the other surrenders one of his kin, he receives the kundu gland. The reward for teaching kindoki is namely a human being to eat.

When somebody is initiated as a ndoki, he selects the animal in whose guise he will haunt people and escape recognition by banganga.

When the bandoki eat someone, they do not consume his nsala soul or his shadow (kiini) but only the body. Of course, the deceased leaves a body but those familiar with bandoki know that what appears to be a body is only a shell, which inwardly has been consumed. During his illness, the deceased was fettered with ropes or felled by the blows of the bandoki.

The bandoki also carry human flesh to the village square to consume it. Only the nganga samuna (the reporter) knows this, as he has chalk marks around the eyes.

The women too, may take human flesh along to the fields and consume it there. No one can see this or know anything about it, with the exception of the nganga samuna, who may exclaim at times: "Remove your evil smell, this is a smell of corpses. Human flesh shall not be eaten here in the village square". The flesh may be eaten anywhere, in the village, in the fields or any other place.

The bandoki eat both during the day and at night. It often happens that two men after a quarrel part in wrath but carry on the quarrel in their dreams. In the morning, one of them finds his child ill and he recounts his dream. Then he must visit nkisi Nkondi and have his antagonist swear by this nkisi that he has not eaten the child. However, the bandoki often manage to cure the illness before their eating has truly begun. They eat swiftly and it is only brother bandoki who are aware of it. They cut up their victim like an animal. Bandoki who have an arrangement to go shares with others with their food, must send these partners a piece of flesh. The rest they may eat themselves, except for the palm of the hand, which they must give to their chief, as it is the choicest part.

If the bandoki, in search of people they can eat, come to an other village, the local bandoki may fight them. If the pipes (magic guns) of the defenders are too powerful, the attackers may seek allies in other villages to help them gain the victory and loot as much food as possible. The spoils are divided among the participants.

Both male and female bandoki have red eyes, as they are forever scouting for victims and never have any time for sleep. They prefer to eat at night, cooking their food over a fire previously used by others and using the plates used by others in the daytime, because a ndoki cooks and eats in his state of kindoki. If a married couple are both bandoki, the husband cuts up the food and the wife cooks it.

The bandoki, who are quarrelsome, recognize each other right away when they meet during their wanderings and nightly reunions. In kindoki-land they have their makanda

and meeting places where they share the flesh between themselves. This sharing may only take place between members of the same makanda, whether it happens in the daytime or in kindoki-land, because that is the way it is with makundu glands.

A ndoki can make the wildest beast tame and gentle, so it will fear no one. The animal appears to have lost its mind, it does not see the hunter and is not aware of any danger until the gun has been fired. To help his fellow bandoki, he can also chase away the animals he uses in his kindoki, to save them from being shot.

The bandoki speak the language of the animals and dispatch animals to destroy the crops in someone else's fields or to steal pigs and goats from the village.

When someone has been initiated in kindoki, he arranges with his ndoki chief to eat someone not belonging to his kanda. They agree on the day when the victim is to be smitten with illness. Following the day of consecration two days must pass and on the third someone will contract an illness that lasts for two days. On the third day he will die, as nine bandoki hold him fettered by a rope round the neck, and these nine suddenly sever the thread of life.

Senior bandoki teach their younger brethren how to attack and kill someone, how to bewitch and torment people and how, in dreams, they must make the innocent walk before them. The culprit, avoiding discovery and accusations in this way, can then be sure of a long life. Young bandoki are also taught how to cover themselves with darkness or with fog to avoid being recognized in dreams.

Many a man turns ndoki because he notes the prosperity of the bandoki, the amount of game they shoot, their cleverness, and the richness of their crops. He wants to know the reason for this. The ndoki replies: "Give me and I will tell you". The other asks: "What do I give you?" "Your mother". "I will not". "Your brother". "No". He then surrenders someone else.

In order for someone to be thoroughly initiated in kindoki, he must go through the initiation ceremony three, four, or even five times. Each time he acquires an additional kundu gland. With the nsidu stone in his groin he kills people and with his knife he cuts the fetters of death. When the bandoki torment someone they put tinder in their ears to avoid hearing the victim's cry for revenge.

When they torment someone, they take his soul and hide it in the woods, or in the burial ground or by the water or in the place where the firewood is fetched, or deep down among the main roots of a tree. If the soul has been hidden under a tree, the sufferer will have a struggle to recover. If the banganga appeal to Nkondi and to other minkisi and the ndoki hears their prayers and appeals to damn the one who is eating the sufferer, he may be wary of letting the victim die and may instead heal him by returning the soul to the body. When the spirit of the ndoki disappears, the patient begins to recover.

The bandoki tell each other how they go about their mischief, so they can learn each other's tricks and dodges for attacking people and escaping detection. The bandoki can be unmasked in many ways. In the first place, they can be recognized by the victim in his dreams and subsequently unmasked by a nkisi through its nganga. In addition they can be

recognized by certain peculiarities such as red eyes, long nails, or a deformed limb.

A husband can find out if his wife is a ndoki by building a small fire under her bed while she is asleep. If this does not awaken her, it proves that she is out setting nightmares upon someone (*fina*). The husband then has every reason to suspect that he will be sold by his wife to be eaten by the bandoki.

Some banganga practice *kindoki* publicly. They vomit blood, sprinkle salt or pepper into their eyes to make them look red and terrifying, and perform various other baffling feats. The bandoki who eat people, on the other hand, do not show their tricks. They prefer to hide themselves. The eyes of the ndoki show small upside-down images in the pupil. Such a ndoki can put spells on crops, fish-nets or other property in his envy. Led by the same motive he can also transform a handsome person into a cripple who is despised by other people. When the ndoki goes out to terrorize (*fina*) people he digs his nails into their breast or in to whatever part of the body he selects for his torment.

A clever ndoki can also set traps to catch his fellow bandoki. This is one of the reasons why many bandoki prefer to consecrate themselves to birds and other animals, whose shape they can assume to escape from a trap. If a ndoki is caught in a trap he falls ill. The nganga then goes to the trap and takes the ndoki's *ndunzi* (soul) and rubs him with it.

Neither a ndoki nor a nganga may point a finger at any living being, lest they kill it. When they manufacture a *nkisi* they also include fingers in it. To point a finger is like firing a magic gun. If a ndoki and his prospective victim are skilled in the same magic and are equally clever, the victim may turn against the ndoki and point a finger at him.

Those who exclaim in surprise at a beautiful child, the excellence of crops or the sleekness of the livestock, may at that very moment be putting a spell on the object of their professed admiration, that causes it to waste away.



Fig. 37. Sculpture of an ancestor (*mudzidi* or *lepfo*, was placed in the ancestor house), Teke in Kolo (Laman 21).



When someone is able to let blood ooze from his hands or feet, or causes blood to appear on the ground, it is a sign that he is an accomplished ndoki. Others turn bald, because, when they eat human flesh, they wipe the fat off in their hair. Such bandoki have kundu even on the crown of their heads.

The ndoki may eat a person in any place and at any time. When he starts eating the bunzi (soul), the victim loses it and he can no longer see the ndoki in his dreams. The bandoki eat boiled and fried human flesh as if it were meat, but they are forbidden to eat the head, lest they become feeble-minded. Nor do they eat the nzeene (privy parts) for fear that it will make them act like lunatics and send them soaring high up into the sky. Nor may they eat the little finger, or their family will become extinct.

They do not prepare the flesh on the usual makukwa stones, but use human skulls instead. If someone suffers from a splitting headache, it is said that the bandoki have carried his head out into the plain to boil their food on. When they return the head, the headache disappears.

Another version is that the bandoki boil the flesh in new pots, often high up in big trees, to prevent fights with other bandoki over the flesh. When a ndoki has prepared his food he tucks up his loincloth between his legs, and settles down to eat with a porcupine quill and a knife. If a piece of flesh falls to the ground, people know that a ndoki has eaten somebody.

Bandoki recognize each other, although their skill varies. They also know their brethren from adjacent villages and often share in their meals. Some bandoki are united by bands of friendship, others hate each other. The animosity is often caused by their refusal to share their food. They are veritable gluttons.

Each ndoki belongs to his own kanda. If a kanda has fostered a ndoki once, there will always be one in every generation after that. If a family has been given nkasa without any of its members succumbing to it, the family is exculpated from harbouring a ndoki.

If a ndoki intends to attack someone he sends an animal, a leopard for instance, ahead of him in the dream to protect himself against nkisi Nduda. Thus, instead of the ndoki, the leopard is hit by the bullets from the magic guns of the nkisi. The animal fights the nkisi until the last of the shot, gunpowder and pepper is finished. After this the ndoki engages the nganga in fight, but he may still be helped by the leopard. The nganga may fall ill and wailingly recount the fight he had with the ndoki and his guardian animal, which has made his body byomi-byomi (swollen). Sometimes the bandoki vary their strategem by sending a blind man ahead of them.

It happens that a ndoki spies on a nganga when the latter is eating. A wise nganga will be aware of the ndoki's scrutiny by the fact that every morsel he lifts to his mouth will fall to the ground.

If somebody sleeps in the courtyard and on his awakening is found to have blood near his heart or on his hands, then male bandoki have been at work. They consider the victim an evil person and wish him to die.

If someone is too wild to be overpowered by the bandoki, they make him all sorts of

gifts in order to tame him. When this has been accomplished, they send him to a ravine or some other place where danger lurks, where they tie up his soul so that he will die.

The bandoki open a house at the corner of the back wall or near the ridge of the roof on the front. They open a body from the flank or from the breast or the head, in order to remove the soul, and to hide it away.

A mischief-maker, who is full of tricks, can be tamed by the nganga giving him an illness and warning him that, unless he mends his ways, the bandoki will be allowed to take him and he will lose both honour and respect.

The bandoki can work all sorts of miracles but, unlike the banganga, they refrain from doing so in public.

A ndoki can be recognized by the kundu glands, one or more of them, that are found when his body is dissected. This kundu gland can be located in the throat and is then called nkaku (barrier). Anyone with this type of kundu succumbs swiftly when he has been given nkasa. Others have makunku in the nostrils. They are felled to the ground by the mere smell of the nkasa.

If someone dies from nkasa and no kundu gland can be found, the whole body is cut up. If the gland is found under the skin it is cut up and destroyed by fire. If no kundu can be found, the dead man is bewitched and must be buried.

If the bandoki wish to torment someone they take "that, which is in interior of the ear" and tie it with threads to the house pole. The victim does not die until they have consumed this.

The bandoki can also eat nkisi or, rather, the nkisi's power of smelling out things. When a nganga notices, for instance, that his nkisi is getting worn and unable to hear him, he calls in the nganga of nkisi Nkondi to restore the "nose" of his nkisi.

The bandoki may also eat the nose of dogs, meaning that they take away kyungu (the desire to take the property of others by witchcraft), as well as the nose of traps, guns (the muzzle), and nets, which prevents the hunter from shooting or catching any game. The owner of the equipment then approaches Nkondi, strikes the nkisi and appeals to it: "Who-soever has eaten the muzzle of my gun, may he die".

There are many bandoki who work together and like each other, and even make friends with their brethren in other villages. There are others, however, who fight and eat each other. The more cunning bandoki defeat those that are less resourceful.

Sometimes the bandoki go shares with their food. Everyone has to contribute an equal amount of food or there will be a quarrel. When the bandoki have caught somebody, one of them may say: "This is my arm", another one: "That is my leg" and a third: "I take the head", until they have divided the body. In that way they share (temo) their catch, taking turns in providing the food. If someone refuses to repay his share, the others clamour: "Eh, today you have eaten that head of mine. Eh, the liver you have not eaten at my expense". By the time all have been satisfied and everyone has made his due contribution, they know how to kill. All bandoki are taught by their elders how to attack their prey, like the young of the leopard or the wildcat are taught. When they wish to practice magic, the bandoki go to the land of night. They abandon their bodies and travel in their kindoki guise.

When a peanut plantation looks promising but the crop fails, it is presumed that the makundu people have harvested the field by their kindoki. A ndoki may not accept food without returning the favour.

The bandoki act in secret, and no one knows who they are, until the banganga have smelled them out.

Some of them confess and tell how and by whom they were introduced to the craft. When a ndoki is taken away to his execution he may also reveal that he has eaten people, how many of them, and who his accessories were. He may furthermore reveal that he has ruined plantations, live-stock and palm-trees. A ndoki works this destruction by taking a pinch of soil and uttering a spell, addings: "Well, make him thin, as lean as an eel, make him swollen as the nkondo tree". Then he spits on the soil and throws it into a plantation, at an animal or at whatever he wants to ruin. The saliva of a ndoki is powerful. The harvest will shrivel up and the animal waste away.

Bandoki that have been executed are called bandoki ku mpemba (in the grave).

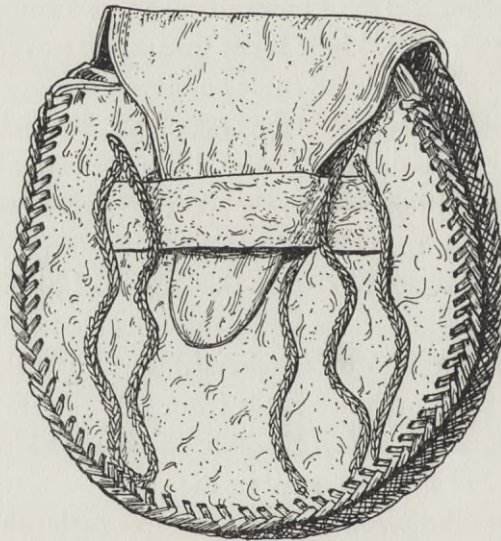


Fig. 38. Bag for fire-making implements (*gepolo*), Kuta in Masendjo (*Laman 4*).

## The Magical Feats of the Bandoki

The bandoki send animals ahead of them when they attack someone, in order to go undetected themselves.

They put a spell on food by throwing a pinch of soil into it. Whoever eats the food will feel sick. They inspire some people to go to dangerous places where they lose their lives. To achieve this, the bandoki burn the luyangu-yangu herb, which makes the heart restless, so that it wishes nothing but to go to the place of danger. When they are burning the herb, the bandoki say: "Make him restless so he makes haste to be on his way". No one can stop a person thus bewitched.

A ndoki may be friendly to an ordinary human being and help him. No one wants to pick a quarrel with bandoki; usually they are shunned, but they may also be honoured and respected for fear that they might otherwise attack people.

The bandoki send wild beasts to steal pigs in the village. No shot will hit the beast and the banganga say that they are sent by the bandoki.

When a ndoki recovers from an illness he must approach his binkonko, so they may consecrate him. Thus if, for instance, he keeps binkonko snakes in a pool, they must lick him all over, from his legs to his head.

Bandoki are unmasked by the banganga zasumuna (the reporters), who are former bandoki. When detected by the banganga and ordered to eat nkasa, they refused and instead they had to give an account of their activities. After confessing they can no longer eat people and instead they spy on the bandoki. If a nganga zasumuna suffers a relapse and eats someone, he will become raving mad. The banganga zasumuna are also given the duty of making nkisi Mwanza. If bandoki pass on the road they call out to the people and warn them: "Watch out, bandoki are passing through, bringing their ntete baskets and tanzi knives, looking for flesh to cut up for their baskets". If, in another village, someone is ill and at death's door, the reporters say: "The smell of corpses is in the air. Soon we will have tidings of a death over there".

If a highly respected person is taken ill or has died, it is believed that he has been eaten by one or more bandoki. The smell diviner-nganga is then called in to investigate the case. This is a slow process as all members of the victim's kanda, even those from other villages, must be invited to be present at the investigation. They are first scrutinized in large groups,

then a family is selected from one of them, and after that the men and women of this family are examined separately. Finally the smell diviner selects the culprit, guided by ecstatic tremors quivering through his body. When somebody has been pointed out as a *ndoki*, it must be announced to every member of his *kanda*, to his brothers-in-law and in his birth-place. Everybody must be present at the main proceedings. The next of kin will either be very grieved, or filled with wrath if the accusation should prove to be true. The proof is supplied by an ordeal, in which the suspect is made to take *nkasa*. In order to assure a correct result, a rigid control is kept and incantations are chanted to prevent *bandoki* or other evil beings, as well as *minkisi* and *banganga*, from interfering by using their magic powers or by giving the suspect laxatives. Sometimes the procedure is fairly simple, but usually it is as slow as it is dramatic. The subject of the ordeal may die quite suddenly, however. First, it is necessary to *sidika nkasa* (keep outsiders from influencing the outcome). The *nganga nkasa*, swearing an oath by a great *nkisi*, promises not to affect the decision by his interference. Then he beseeches the *minkisi* to watch over the suspect, so neither *bandoki*, nor *minkisi*, nor anybody else, shall be able to bewitch him. When the *nganga* is ready to *sidika nkasa*, people come in flocks to watch him perform all sorts of baffling feats. The spectators collect several bundles of firewood. The *nganga* takes one stick from each bundle and ties them together with a knot. Then he takes *nsonya* grass and puts it with the wood in the middle of the fireplace. He goes on to cut the *nkisi* medicine: *kaazu*, *lusaku-saku*, *luyala*, *nkiduku*, and *tondo*. He spits on it and sends for water to mix the ingredients. He takes some of the medicine and rubs it on his body, his hair and his loincloth, because the medicine is to protect him against the power of fire. Then the *nganga* orders dry grass to be fetched, ties it together, lights it and points it three or four times at the sky. He lights the wood with the burning grass singing: "Mbulu (*nkisi*) tse" (*tseta*=strike), "Mbulu koo" (*koola*=set free). "You, who wield the hoe (women), You who wield the knife for tapping the palm-wine (men), am I to sing this song by myself?" "E, maama, there it burns hotly, *kingundunga* (a gland resembling *kundu*). E, maama, bring the fire, *kingundunga* and you shall draw up to the fire". When he walks through the fire the flames surround his body entirely, yet he is not burned, as he has anointed himself with the medicine that protects against the power of fire.

As an alternative, he may cut a piece from his tongue. In that case he summons people to hold him. He takes a knife and cuts off the tip of his tongue and starts to sing:

"The knife I received that day  
The day that passes becomes scorching  
Scorching, the day I go to be burned  
Burned, mother Nkenge" etc.

He puts the severed piece on a cassava and puts it on the fire. As soon as it is roasted, he eats it, singing: "The body is like a rag" etc. Then he goes to the crossroads, picks up some soil and rubs it on his tongue which is thereby restored to its former state. He drinks palm-wine and sings:

“On the big mainroad you did not walk, did you?  
When I said swallow, you did not swallow, did you?  
When I said empty, you did not empty, did you?” etc.

Meanwhile, the one sentenced to take nkasa is kept in custody. He has to go to sleep without receiving any food or drink, sometimes for as long as three days. When the nkasa nganga arrives, he places the subject of the test on the nkasa stone, the stone on which the nkasa bark is ground. The stone is consecrated by drawing a circle around it with chalk and yellow ochre. Both the bark and those who fetch it have been consecrated beforehand and incantations have made them immune to all undue influences, whether from bandoki, minkisi or wily people.

In some parts, the subject kneels beside the stone when the bark is ground. The nkasa nganga asks: “Will you eat?” The subject: “Eh, I will not!” The nganga throws away the nkasa and takes some new bark, asking: “Will you eat?” “Eh, I will eat, I will not refuse”. This is repeated three times. Those who are made to drink nkasa (mungola nkasa)<sup>1</sup> are exhorted to state their case, which may go like this: “For the sake of the one that is ill shall I eat nkasa. If it should be that I have any knowledge of the crime that he charges me with, that it should indeed be I who wanted to eat him, oh, nkasa, empty, empty! But if I should not be guilty of his accusation, then may my bladder empty itself and may my excrements be expelled as I sleep! Ever since my youth I am such as I am. I do not know the taste of human flesh. My nkasa koo-koola (take away)”.

The nkasa nganga either kneads the nkasa into three round cakes and makes the mungola nkasa swallow these whole and wash them down with a thin broth from a bowl made of a tutu calabash, or else the suspect is given three bowls of pulverized nkasa. The nganga at once begins his invocations: “You have eaten a female, you have eaten a male. Therefore, oh, nkasa, go and blast the rock in the stomach, blast the ravines, make a hole in the barrel and run to the grass. The old ones have left. Nkasa nee-neena (empty, empty). Nkasa koo-koola (take, take away the heart). Nkasa kwa-kwanga (sever, sever the thread of life)”.

After that, the mungola nkasa is made to dance out in the square, where people have flocked together to watch. In the meantime, the nganga exhorts and beseeches both the one who has eaten nkasa and a variety of inanimate objects (take bilokolo) to find out whether the suspect has been initiated as a ndoki, and, if so, where his makundu glands are hidden, so the nkasa will be able to penetrate thither. If this does not happen, the suspect is acquitted. During these bilokolo, the nganga in his songs tries to locate the kundu gland, the seat of kindoki. First he enumerates all kinds of animals, plants, waterpools, ravines, in short every possible hiding place of the kundu gland, and then continues with the dead and other people. During this ceremony, accompanied by singing, the suspect is closely observed for signs of guilt, such as evacuating his bowels or suddenly dropping to the ground. This occurs when the nganga finds out where the kundu is hidden.

There are in the neighbourhood certain dangerous places where ordinary people do not

<sup>1</sup> Mungola nkasa actually means “one who has passed the nkasa test (LDRF, p. 611).

dare to go. It is believed that the bandoki hide their magic glands in these places. If the nganga has named these places several times without the mungola nkasa dropping down or ridding himself of the nkasa, he is innocent and set free.

A few of the songs may be quoted. The nkasa is administered with this song:

“Receive the nkasa cake,  
Eh, receive this cake, wo (this one)” (bis)  
“Eh, this child, oh, mother  
has taken a mug of nkasa  
Swallow it, a mug of nkasa”

When he has eaten, he is given two strips of cloth to fasten to his hips, so that he can wipe his mouth if he vomits. If the nkasa forms a lump in the stomach, the following song is sung to prevent the suspect from vomiting or evacuating his bowels:

“The nkasa has become a lump  
Now I pass through  
You are used to eating,  
Now I pass through”.

The following song is sung by the mvengudi (he who wants to push aside, help) if the bilokolo cause the nkasa to get stuck and it is suspected that the mungola nkasa has hidden his kundu:

“Nkasa prevent  
He will not eat it tomorrow  
Tomorrow morning it will be bitter”.

A second mvengudi then sings:

“Ku nkasa yela (watch out, be prudent)  
Eh, mothers, I have not stopped the nkasa in him” etc.

During the ordeal, appeals are directed to various major minkisi. If the nkasa does not have any effect, they clap their hands and hit the ndunga drum vigorously:

“Eh, mbemba (sea eagle) remain  
E, mbemba, eh, mbemba  
They pretend to be sick e-e” etc.

If the suspect's mind becomes affected, they sing:

“The nsesi antelope, bwelwe (very clever)  
Be clever, be clever” etc.

The following objects are mentioned repeatedly during the incantation, to find out whether the mungola nkasa can answer negatively. When the questions are repeated, the whole assembly must join in the following chorus:

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| “Mbela (knife) zoole”     | The nganga: “Does he not eat people?”      |
| “Nsoma (needle) myole”    | (The question is repeated after each line) |
| “Binzu (pots) byole”      |  |
| “Zalu (spoon) byole”      |  |
| “Malonga (plates) moole”. |  |

The suspect should answer: “I do not eat people”. If the mungola nkasa is able to say no correctly, without any stammering or whispering, he is no ndoki. The suspect dances and whirls around incessantly. He may soon start vomiting. Then he is given a few more bowls. He drinks and capers until dusk falls. He is exhorted by his friends to watch his posterior: “Be strong in your buttocks. Contract them tightly when you vomit. When you feel it coming, do not give in or your bowels will empty themselves”.

His relatives have to watch him to ensure that none of those present play any evil tricks on him. If they hate him, they may pour water where he has been sitting and claim that he has emptied his bladder. If he relieves neither his bladder nor his bowels before the following morning, he is acquitted. He is no ndoki. The nganga rubs him with chalk and he is declared innocent. A great many salvos are fired and his relatives feel great joy. When he has been rubbed with chalk he may empty his bowels and his bladder.

If the one who has eaten nkasa has looked at the sun at its zenith three times and drops to the ground at the fourth look, he is guilty. If he is innocent, on the other hand, he keeps cutting capers and singing.

When the sun begins to move aside in the west they stop their incantations, realizing that he will not die. He has passed the test and great festivities will be held in his village. A compensation is awarded, which includes a slave and pigs. The mungola nkasa must be rubbed with chalk because he is alive. The price of this is one goat. Afterwards, many salvos are fired. If the mungola nkasa is a man, hens are slaughtered for him, if it is a woman they boil ntondya and ngola fishes. The acquitted is powdered and his hair is shaved off round his head, he is praised and honoured everywhere, including the market place. Loud cries of rejoicing are raised.

If a ndoki dies from nkasa, the people do not grieve, as it is only proper that a cannibal should vanish from the village. The surviving members of his kanda all push a fresh palm-nut into the corpse’s anus and then rub themselves with the nuts.

In the old days, a ndoki might consult a nganga, who could prevent the nkasa from taking effect.

In some parts custom permitted that the ndoki be redeemed if he was a respected person. Usually attempts were made to find another ndoki to take his place.

If someone who has been given nkasa in the early morning, ere the sun has reached its zenith empties his bowels and his bladder before the people gathered in the square, they clamour that the ndoki be seized and placed in custody to prevent him from escaping. His relatives are enraged and his brothers-in-law want to kill him on the spot.

When a ndoki has died from nkasa, he may be dissected in order to find out how many



makundu he has and where they are located. When this is done, his kindoki goes to the grave.

It is not possible to recognize a ndoki by his appearance, but he may betray himself by his speech. If the people are considering giving someone nkasa, they may at night boil yuuma with a small addition of meat and put some of it near the suspect. If he heads towards the smell of meat and eats from it, they are sure he is a ndoki.

Others make sure by paring the skin off their footsoles and frying it over the fire. In the meantime, they watch the suspect, to see if he remains immobile. If he reacts to the smell, they know him to be a ndoki.

In some parts in the north they go in the early morning down to the water and build a small house of masyasya leaves for the ndoki and his nkasa. When the nkasa has been administered, he is made to walk up and down the hills while the people sing, calling on nkisi Suku to ascertain whether the ndoki will live till dawn. They sing:

“He has two makundu e-e  
May she (the nkasa) harass the breast  
Brother, lower ...” etc.

They use the same words that mark the mbundu ordeal, such as: “The ndoki to whom they gave the nkasa has emptied his bladder, has purged his bowels” etc. In the song, mbundu is mentioned because a small quantity of this poison, enough to cover the point of a fingernail, is often mixed into the soaked nkasa. The mbundu affects the stomach in such a way, that, if the one who drinks it is no ndoki he will empty his bladder, but if he has kundu he will drop to the ground and his body will burst as if slit open with a knife. The ndoki is then addressed as follows: “Confess, have you not eaten the uninitiated on your bedstead? Tell us have you not eaten human flesh? Eh, mbundu torment ... eh, torment”. After this they sing: “Eh, torment, father, father Mbundu; Eh, torment father, father Mbundu. Eh come you, eh come you” etc. Another song goes like this:

“His nkasa  
He has shit it on his legs  
I have wiped it away  
Ah, his nkasa  
His nkasa, he has shit it on his legs  
I have wiped it away”.

They repeat the songs invoking Mbundu, as the one who passes his water after taking nkasa is a ndoki. It is the nkasa that he passes.

The penalty for being a ndoki is death. A ndoki cannot be censured or taught. He will not listen to admonitions. If a ndoki is accused of being a ndoki, he may say: “Tell me, am I the only ndoki and the only man who eats people. Well, I pass on; Cut up my body. You remain”. He will soon be cut up and consumed by fire. The bandoki will never confess to having eaten human flesh or reveal whom they have eaten. They persist in their denials.

It happens sometimes that a ndoki shows signs of guilt after taking nkasa, has dizzy spells and drops to the ground, but still remains very popular. In that case the people may not want him to die in his kindoki state. Then they first carry him to Ngingu's nganga, who gives him a drink from the shell of nkisi Ngingu; then they shave his hair, rake his skin until blood oozes from it and rub his body with gunpowder. After this he recovers. He has had his punishment and can no longer eat human flesh.

No ndoki has ever been seen with a human bone or a piece of human flesh in his hands, but, in order to scare others and to command the awe of the people, the bandoki may say: "I shall eat you".

Those who have died in a state of kindoki and were subsequently burnt, have a reddish appearance, whereas those who have died in their beds and have been buried appear greyish. When they meet in the grave, they quarrel with each other on this account. The former say: "You have been burnt, haven't you, or why are you so red?" Those who have died in bed: "Was I not buried or why should I be so greyish?"

In the world of the dead, the bandoki have not mingled with the other dead, but have settled in their own villages.

Bandoki and other evil people may poison the water, for instance by using the milk of a poisonous cactus, the powder (pollen) of the ntimbu mya nsanda (a wild fig tree) and of ntutu (*Phytolacca stricta*), or the pubic hair and the dirt collected under the nails. If anyone drinks of this water, his stomach swells up until it reaches his head and he dies.

A ndoki can make somebody docile by robbing him of his reason when he is dreaming, replacing it with folly. Inspired by envy, a ndoki may play the same trick on a fellow ndoki going to war. The victim does not try to make his escape, but meekly allows himself to be shot, due to the cunning of the first ndoki.

The bampiisa (messengers) peel the nkasa bark off the tree. When they return to the village, they take down an owl and put it on the bark. They press the juice out of the bark and put hairs of various animals in the nkasa, to prevent the ndoki from dying too soon.

The nkasa must be kept overnight in the masyasya house, that has meanwhile been completed. When the ndoki arrives there, he is immediately given two or three cups of nkasa and made to dance so that the nkasa may run down to the kundu. As the kundu tries to resist the nkasa and keeps its mouth closed, the nkasa tries in vain to penetrate into the kundu. Instead it runs into the limbs, searching around for the kundu. But in vain. The nkasa then comes out through the mouth of the ndoki. If this happens, the ndoki has tied up the mouth of the kundu so tightly that it will never again lust for human flesh. He becomes like ordinary people, who lack kundu.

If the mouth of the kundu is open, on the other hand, the nkasa penetrates at once and death sets in.

The relatives of the one that was eaten may take a ramrod and poke out the eyes of the ndoki, break his limbs, let gunpowder explode in his eyes and ears, and thrust a knife into

the pit of his stomach, to see where the kundu is located. One way to execute a ndoki is to cut off his arms and legs, although he may live for two or three more days.

He may be killed by the side of the road as a warning to the wayfarers. If a ndoki happens to pass and sees his dying fellow, he will abandon his kindoki because being killed by the roadside is an ignominious fate. Bandoki can also be executed by beheading or shooting them and subsequently they are cut up to have the makundu located. Others are strangled and hung by the wayside, others again are clubbed to death like pigs. When a ndoki is to be killed, his executioners drag him along the ground and torment him as a warning to other people not to become a ndoki.

If nkasa is administered to someone without a kundu, the poison comes out only by the mouth. If somebody vomits all the nkasa, he is given a couple of mugs of gunpowder as an indemnity payment (munswaku). He is also rubbed with red ndimba paint and receives three pigs to pay for the palm-wine with which he is to "rinse" his mouth. The indemnity payment proper (munswaku) consists of nine ntete baskets, two lengths of cloth (bindele) to wipe the sweat away, nkelele cloth and ten hens to alleviate his panting (shortness of breath), and palmwine galore to treat both men and women.

As a protection against bandoki, magic guns are set behind the house, by the sidewall, porch or door. They consist of hollow grass-stalks filled with gunpowder, small stones and medicine from a nkisi. At the door, loaded hen eggs are added. They are hidden in the ground to prevent the bandoki from seeing them. If a ndoki bends forward to open the door the egg explodes and a thunderbolt hits him in the face. He collapses outside the door. The owner of the house, when he hears the sound of the fall, immediately says: "Tie up the arms, tie up the bandoki". People living in other houses may hear it and ask: "What was that falling over by your house?" The owner answers: "A ndoki came and succumbed to the guns by my door". If, by next morning, someone has fallen ill, they know that he intended to eat someone.

If the bandoki try to enter the house, the guns fire. If any of them is hit, he will fall ill and, as a rule, die after a while. Some may recover, however, and are then able to abandon their kindoki.

Sometimes magic guns are also set at crossroads and by the corners of the bed. Along the road, guns made from leaves of the bwongo tree may be set. If a ndoki happens to pass that way he will fall down and lose his power to ensnare people.

If someone's illness is caused by bandoki, the people can kowa nloko (appeal to) a great nkisi Nkosi. The bandoki may become afraid to keep the sufferer, knowing that Nkosi is powerful enough to discover a ndoki and hold him to torment him to death. Therefore, the bandoki leave the sufferer alone and he recovers.

Another custom is to put medicine on the roads around the village, so that the bakisi may pursue the ndoki and harm him.

A proven ndoki cannot be chastened or punished with words. He must eat nkasa instead, or is shot, or poison is put into his palm-wine to make him die. A ndoki never hears a

word of reproof, as he has buried his ears in the rapids by the waterfalls. Nor does he hear the nkoko—appeals to nkisi Nkondi or nkisi Nkosi.

In more recent days, it has happened that clement people have attempted to save the life of a ndoki, who has taken nkasa, by giving him some medicine to allay the dizziness caused by the poison. If the nkasa comes frothing out of the mouth, however, the kundu gland has already burst. If such a ndoki's life is spared he heals the gland by eating somebody. For this reason he could not be allowed to live.

Nkadi a mpemba (the devil) is the chief ndoki. It is he who is mainly responsible for teaching the bandoki their evil ways. He is devoid of any mercy or clemency. If a ndoki surpasses his brethren in foul deeds, he is called nkadi a mpemba, "the master of all evil". Anyone excelling in kindoki is called "nkadi a mpemba". Nkadi a mpemba is the chief of the bandoki. He has allied himself with the rulers of the water and the ravines (simbi spirits). Combining forces, they may fetter someone and cause his death by severing the rope. The water simbi spirit is against this practice and merely wishes the victim to fall ill. The chief of bandoki and the spirit of ravines, however, are not satisfied with that and therefore they are called nkadi a mpemba (a cruel killer). Other titles bestowed on notorious bandoki are: magwembele (long nails), mambeko (the tall one), kimbudi (he who shows no consideration for the motherless).

The expression nkadi a mpemba is also used by people who are angry, as a term of abuse, for instance: "You deserve to be smashed, You deserve to be cut up and torn to pieces. You deserve to go to nkadi a mpemba". People believe that nkadi a mpemba is a land, where the sun never shines and where the dead dwell. In abuse, the term refers to the land of the dead, who are never seen again, not even in dreams.

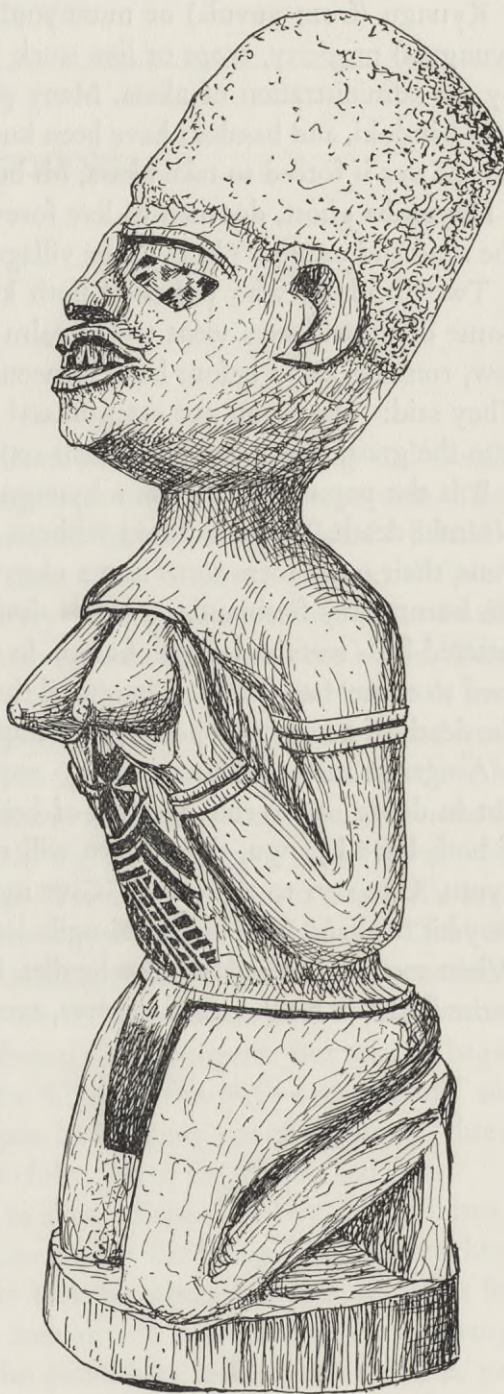


Fig. 39. Nkisi Ngwima, Sundi in Mayombe (Laman 722).

Kyungu (from yuvula) or munnyuula (from yuula), the power to use magic to usurp (yungula) property, crops or live stock belonging to others, is not, like kindoki, punished by the administration of nkasa. Many people with kyungu power have, however, turned into bandoki, and bandoki have been known to practice kyungu. If someone who possesses this power is forced to take nkasa, his body is not transformed into a nkuyu spirit but into a kinyumba ghost, doomed to live forever in a village in the bush. They may be seen on the road and in other places in the village.

Two bandoki, who possessed both kindoki and kyungu, died near the Yinga woods. Some of the villagers went to tap palm-wine. When they passed the graves, one of them saw, running away before him, someone they had left behind in the village eating nkasa. They said: "Have you not eaten nkasa? How can you run like that?" He just disappeared into the grass, "kwa-kwa". On their return to the village they found him dead.

It is the popular belief that a kyungu ndoki turns into binyumba, like those dying the Nzambi death. When bandoki without kyungu succumb to nkasa or are killed by magic guns, their outer form turns into a nkuyu ghost, that goes and eats in the plain. Those that are burnt carry firebrands, whereas those who have fallen victim to the guns carry their tattered bed- mats and strips of cloth. In the old days, if their voices were heard, the nganga used to enumerate kanda names until the voices fell silent. The voice of a nkuyu portended the death of a venerable person or the approach of some major calamity.

A nganga may sometimes seek to acquire kyungu in order to bewitch a fellow nganga, but in doing so, he runs the risk of being bereft of his kyutu (soul, spirit) by his victim. If both have kyungu, their kyutu will meet and neither of them can rob the other of his kyutu. One says to the other: "Give me your hand, yaaya, the lie was countered". Then they hit the hand with kimpanzi-ngila leaves and both kyutu return to their masters' bodies. When such a ndoki takes nkasa he dies, because the kundu glands are scattered through his entire body, in his throat, in his eyes, even in his fingers.

Tales about Bandoki

Some women went out fishing. They fished from morning till evening and caught much fish. In the evening, on their way home, they were surprised by a rainstorm. They walked and walked without reaching their destination. Instead, they suddenly beheld a house with a fire crackling on the hearth. One of them said: "Shall we go inside?" "No". "Where did the house and the fire come from? They were not here earlier". But finally the five women went inside. A boy, who accompanied them, hid behind the house. There was no one in the house and the women became apprehensive and trembled with fear. They realized that it was the house of a kinunu (ghost). When the kinunu had parted from his fellows at their meeting place in the plain, he went home, but when he arrived there he heard a hum of voices come from his house. The kinunu asked who they were, but nobody answered. The women merely stared, dumb with fright. Thereupon the kinunu said: "Those are my fishes". The kinunu began to sing: "Poke out, poke out this girl's eyes, Kilodi" and continued his singing until all the women's eyes had been poked out. Then the kinunu closed up the house and went to his people, telling them what the house contained.

The boy reappeared from behind the house and asked: "Are you all alive?" The women answered: "Yes, we are alive". He went inside and found their eyes gone. But then he began to repeat the song of the kinunu, singing: "Return therefore this girl's eyes, Kilodi" and continued until all eyes had been restored. Thereupon he led them out of the house, threw several banana stalks into the house and closed it carefully, just as the kinunu had done.

After a while they found the road leading back to their village. The boy climbed into a tree and saw that the women had made their escape just as the kinunu was approaching with his escort. Some of them were carrying ntete baskets, others had pots, machets for cutting up the meat and other knives. There were men as well as women in the company.

The boy sang a song about them: "The one who passes him picks up his coals, E, yaa kingele, kinge". Those who passed him heard the song and threw him two cassava loaves. More passed and the boy sang his song again. They gave him three kwanga. By then the women had reached their village.

At the same time the binunu had reached the house. It was closed up tight and they did not bother to look inside but put fire to it. It burned and the banana stalks inside crackled and crackled "du-du-duta-fyo" from the heat. Those who stood outside rejoiced to hear

the crackle of human bodies in the fire. They answered "kyu-kyu" at the thought of having human flesh soon. Presently the house came down but when they were to rake out the bodies, only banana stalks and coals were recovered. They raked everything through and found nothing. Then they became furious with the one who had fetched them in vain. They seized him, threw him in the fire and ate him.

The women, who had come home, rubbed their mouths against the ground (swearing) not to go fishing again like that for a long time to come.

A man had a wife who was a ndoki. She slept so soundly that she did not stir, despite his attempts to wake her. It was like that every single night. The husband thought: Truly, she must be initiated as a ndoki and is no ordinary human being.

One night he slept very fitfully. Sometimes he saw a human being, with a head like that of a nkabi antelope with horns, standing in the door. When he saw this, his body convulsed and he woke. He looked around. His wife lay behind him but did not stir. When he noticed this, he woke his wife and asked: "Who is it that holds my wife?" He shook her and she stretched, asking: "Why did you wake me?" The husband answered: "Because your people are dying in the village. Hear the cries. Is it not you who makes them cry louder and louder?" He lay down in another house and slept well. But he thought: "I will go and sleep in my house again". He did so, but sat up all night wondering how he would find out what his wife was up to. Well, he would consult a nganga and ask him how to go about it. The nganga said to him: "If you don't admonish her, she will soon take your life". He blocked the door with medicine. In the evening the couple slept. Then the man felt as if someone were stepping over him. He looked behind him and realized that it was only the outer shell she had left behind. She herself had gone far away. He tried to wake the shell but it remained still. But when the roosters were about to crow "koko-dyo-koo", she began to wake. Now he ground his pepper. In the evening they lay down to sleep again. He pretended to sleep heavily. All at once the wife jumped onto the floor and disappeared through the door. The husband took the pepper and rubbed it on the head of the shell she had left.

The time approached when she was to return home. She removed the nkabi head that she wore while abroad to set nightmares upon people. She took her own head and said: "My head, stick on, stick on". She took up the head. It fell to the floor. She said: "Lift my head, stick on, stick on!" She took it up. It fell down. She said: "E-e-e, my head, what is the matter with you?" She took the nkabi head and put it on. It stuck. But every time she tried to take her own head it fell to the floor at once.

The darkness lifted and she did not go outside. She sat down in a corner of the house. Her husband looked at her and there was a nkabi head stuck on her body. Her own head she held clasped in her hands. The husband was frightened. His wife had tears in the eyes of the nkabi head.

When the husband saw this, he called his brothers-in-law. When they came, he said: "Look how your sister conducts herself". They saw her, with her nkabi head, crouching

in the corner. They took her home and consulted a nganga about her. He revealed that the husband had rubbed her head with pepper. But if they were to take it to the water and wash it thoroughly, her fellow bandoki would put it back. They did as they were told and in the evening her fellow bandoki put her own head back. In the morning she was seen wearing her own head, but only a few days later she died.

A man and a woman lived in sin. The man did not realize that the woman was a ndoki. One night she said to him: "You are not to come here tonight". Nevertheless, when darkness had fallen he came all the same. There was nobody home, but he lay down on the bed and fell asleep.

The woman was with her fellow bandoki and when she returned, she brought them along, carrying a basket with human flesh. Those who entered first heard the man snoring and said: "E-e-e, there is a hunga (non-ndoki) in there". The woman tried to deny it, but when she entered she found that there was indeed a hunga in the house. She saw who it was and tried to hide him, but did not succeed. Then she said to the man: "It is your own fault. Did I not tell you not to come here? Sit down. Let us eat the flesh we have prepared. That is what you want, isn't it?" His whole body trembled as he protested that he did not know how such meat should be eaten. While the food was being prepared the bandoki showed hundreds of tricks. One said: "Stretch" and he stretched out his legs until they were so long that they touched the roof. Another arched his back so it touched the roof. After that, somebody stretched the magic basket until it in its turn touched the roof. When the food was ready, the man was given a portion to eat. But he refused. They attempted to put the flesh into his mouth forcibly, but he rushed out of the house and ran home. The bandoki feasted all through the night.

In the morning the man had been struck dumb and his eyes rolled wildly in all directions. People asked him: "Have you perhaps seen something ghostly?" They took him to a nganga,

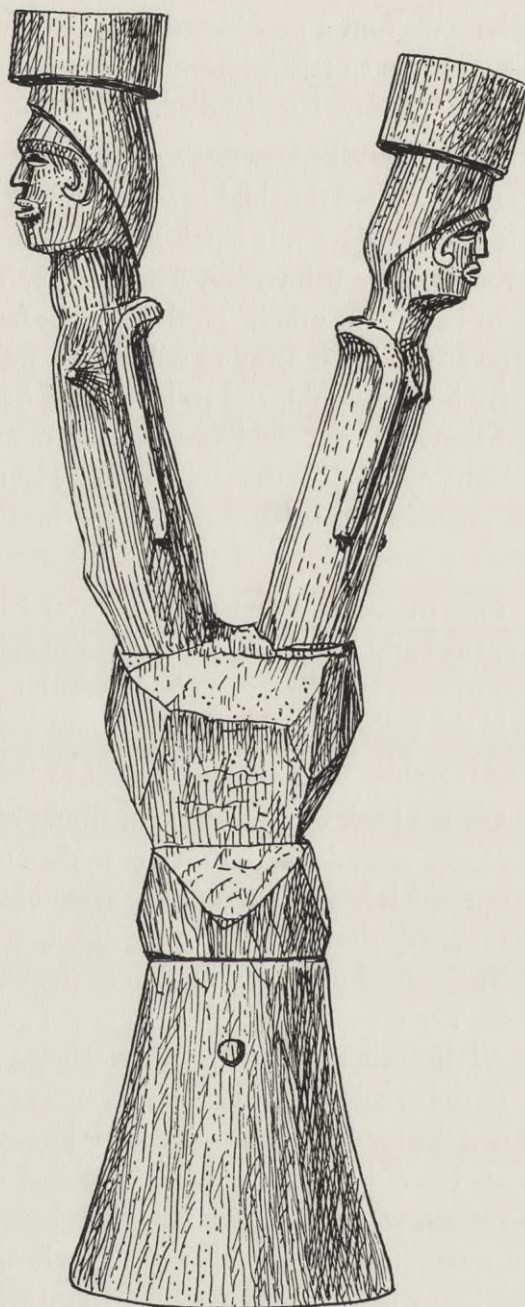


Fig. 40. Nkisi, Sundi in Lolo (Laman 852).



who gave him a pouch-seed to split between his teeth. After splitting three of these seeds he was able to talk without coming to any harm. Thereupon he revealed everything, but only a few days later he died.

A man called MASWENA was saved from kindoki. A member of his kanda was a ndoki. He had spirited the child MASWENA away by kindoki. He was walking past the place where his father-in-law was tapping palm-wine. When the latter saw him pass, he invited him over to drink palm-wine. They drank. The father-in-law asked: "What have you got in your bag?" The other: "Nothing". The father-in-law: "Come on, hand over my grandchild. You are taking it away to sell it". He was ashamed and could not deny it, seeing that they were both bandoki, and so he handed over the grandchild.

Meanwhile the child was lying in the village, ill and unable to suck. The father-in-law asked: "Well, does the child suck?" The mother: "No". But as soon as the child looked at its grandfather, it lay down at the breast and began to suck, because its shadow (kiini) had returned. His grandfather had thrown a pinch of soil on it. MASWENA is still alive today.

One morning, when the people of Kingila woke up, they saw a remarkable sight. A human body lay there, cut up into many pieces. One man went to let his pigs out. They ran to the place where the body was lying. The owner of the pigs followed them and beheld the body. He returned to his house and died soon afterwards. Then the people realized that it was he who had been cut up by the bandoki the preceding night.

On the bank of the Congo at Buulu crocodiles often caught people. One day, NSUMBU KYANDU went down to the river to dam up pools left by the river. He was violently startled when he felt heavy blows (yi-yi) against his body and cried for help: "E, mother, I go away". A crocodile shot past him in the direction of the river.

This caused great commotion in the village. The women ran to the river. They cried in vain. The crocodile said: "Eh, the one I grabbed with my hands, he is caught". They looked in all directions but saw nobody. They all clasped their heads and wept.

In the evening they went down again to look. Suddenly NSUMBU KYANDU came walking down the road from the river to his house. He saw the anxious women who were bewailing him. He did not lament. They looked at him and whispered: "Surely, that is NSUMBU KYANDU, whom we were bewailing because he was taken by the crocodile". After a while he uttered: "Who are all these people who sit there by my house?" The women: "But it is you whom we are bewailing. You went to the crocodile". He: "Ah, I have not gone to the crocodile. But they caught me, these people and those people. Look, here are the scratches of the mfwindi plant and the thorns they hit me with as they pursued me". The people looked. They grabbed hold of each other, saying: "E, but which Nzambi is this? Surely we die; Is it the crocodile that does this?" He: "E, it is forbidden to see the bandoki who are here. E, something in the water bewitched me. They belaboured me, they boiled banyenge.<sup>1</sup> E, the people below the surface of the water were dim-sighted." That is what happened the first time he was caught.

<sup>1</sup> Banyenge can mean "big, handsome men" but also "fish".

Once more the crocodile caught him. They had gone to the pools to catch the fish that were teeming there. The women had put out poison and the fish said: "Look at us". They caught fish after fish. Those who had nseba or mpidi baskets did not catch many fish, whereas those who used lembo bucks had a rich catch. Afterwards, they divided the fish equally among themselves and returned to the village. They agreed not to return to the river in the dark to empty the lembo bucks, but to wait until morning. Who should do it? The one who was consecrated to the fish. They slept and silence reigned. But the old man was beginning to stir. NSUMBU KYANDU woke his wife: "E, MBANGUDI. E, MBANGUDI". She: "What is it?" "Wake up. Come and watch over me at the river". She: "By my father, I will not. At this hour I will not go. Oh, can you not desist from going. Don't be so restless. Don't you know that this is the hour when the bandoki eat?" She stayed behind. Thereupon he went to rouse MBEYA, saying: "Come and watch over me at the river where we fished". She: "Eh, our lord. It is so dark, let us not go". He said: "Bah, you are afraid all the time". She: "Maybe the nkuyu spirits are wandering about." He: "There are two of us, how could they eat us? Let us go!"

They went on their way, gun in hand, and carefully inspected the bucks, going from one to the other. Then she saw something advancing on the riverbank. It became very dark. What had happened? He cried in distress: "E, MBEYA, shoot!" She returned to the village crying in distress: "E, mother, master NSUMBU KYANDU has gone to the crocodile." They went to inspect the place where he had vanished. Nothing but sand and mfwindi bushes was to be seen. They wept. He was lost forever. Later someone else was given his name.

The ruler MUNGWELA possessed kindoki and had visions. He was initiated in this craft by a crocodile called KOLA DYEDYE. This crocodile also possessed some other people.

At one time, it was called by MPUNGU NSWALU, who went to the bank of the Congo to empty his fishing bucks from Nyenge nzo down to Hungu tadi. Right then MUNGWELA came, carrying his manioc, and called as if calling his pigs: "Ma-o, Ma-o". NGOMA was startled and looked around. He thought: "Was that not by the river? No pigs come from there". He crouched behind a stone to watch. MUNGWELA kept calling "Ma-o, ma-o" and went far out. Suddenly he saw a ripple on the water. A crocodile lay there sprawling in its full length. It swam closer, "eya-eya, eya-eya", and went ashore. There MUNGWELA cut manioc for it. NGOMA was completely aghast. He could not hide his face completely. Their eyes met and MUNGWELA asked NGOMA if he had seen him. He answered: "No". MUNGWELA said: "If you did, it is your misfortune". In MUNGWELA's days, weeping and wailing rent the air, as the village was threatened with extinction. But the following day, KOLA DYEDYE was killed, because when an animal is about to die, it loses its wits. The river was far out. A woman called NKALA went to fetch water. Suddenly, all was darkness around her as she was dragged under the water, crying: "E, mother, I pass away". The people in the village heard the cry in consternation. But the people in another village rushed down at once with clubs of lubota and teye, into the water, "yikedekede, yikedekede" (striking the water), asking: "Where is it? Where is it?" Then the crocodile hit out with its tail and

they were sent staggering. The one that was caught looked around. He saw a crocodile that turned into a man with a full beard. He said: "E, mother, I die." The others: "E, through you we have died, "keda-keda, teeta". The crocodile contributed: "Eh, nor have I been killed by a club". It shook its tail and the people dispersed. They answered: "That is a lie, through you we have died in numbers. Maybe today it was us you intended to kill". They began to hit with all their might, "yikedede-kede" until they had broken its power and finally killed it.

Thereupon they tied an immense rope round the crocodile, pulled it tight, and then dragged it up on the bank, where it stretched out to a length of four, maybe even five fathoms. They turned it on its back and cut open its belly in which a quantity of fat, reddish like that of hens was found. The stomach contained hundreds of things: big ankle rings, other rings and various objects of the kind that women plait. They cut up the crocodile, made a big bonfire and burned the remains.

A wife was turned out by her husband. She took her child and left, but was overtaken by darkness and rain. She sought shelter in a house where a small fire glowered. She believed it was the house of a palm-wine tapper, but it belonged to a kinyumba. The kinyumba had been out in the plain with others of her kind to get her share of human flesh and now returned to her house. When the woman heard her steps, she hid under the bed holding the child to her breast. The kinyumba entered, unaware of the presence of human beings. She put down her bundle and prepared to take the pot and put it on the fire. She untied her bundle and put the flesh in the pot, saying: "Well, I received a hand, and a part of the head, and this and that, as my share of the flesh". The woman felt her heart jump. Her hair stood on end. The kinyumba placed the pot over the fire and poured water into it. The child at its mother's breast said: "Mother, water I want". The kinyumba jumped with surprise, thinking that it was the flesh in the pot talking. She took the flesh saying: "When I ate So-and-so, he did not speak at all. But what is this, a miracle?" Then she began to pound the flesh, "tu-tu-tu", but the child said: "Mother, water". The head of the kinyumba throbbed, her stomach rumbled. She was ready to take the flesh: "What shall I do with the flesh? Eat it? I must pound it and yet pour on more water. Is it not flesh? Will it tear the life out of me? When I ate So-and-so he did not say one word. Is this perhaps a simbi-nkita spirit?" She continued pounding "tu-tu-tu", put it into the pot and poured water over it.

Again the child said: "Mother, water". The kinyumba was struck by an idea: "Ah, it cannot be the flesh talking; Ah, it comes from the inner part of the house". She went to look. There was nothing to see. But then she looked under the bed and saw the wife and the child, trembling with fear. "Ah, there they are, my two helpings of flesh".

The kinyumba ignored the flesh she had received before and hurried out of the house, closing it from top to bottom, and went to tell her people about the two helpings of flesh she had at home. But the wife hastened to cut off the strings that barred the door. She walked off with her child and was far away when the others came and found the house empty. They asked: "Where is the flesh?" The kinyumba: "In here I left it". The others were furious, tied her up, threw her into the fire and ate her.

There was a nkabi antelope, that day after day came feeding in the peanut plantations. The hunters lay in wait for it but nothing was seen, either by day or by night. They were discussing the problem, when a clever person said: "Take off your loin-cloth and go stark naked when you lie in wait for the antelope and then you will see it". This the hunter did. When he looked towards the mountain he saw a nkabi-hind leaping over the plantation. But as he looked it was transformed into a woman. In front, she had a breast cloth hanging from a raffia string and her head was covered with hair. She began to pull up peanut stands, and throwing them one by one into the plantation. The hunter thought: "When you come this far, I shoot".

When she did, the hunter fired and hit her with a nsadi stone. But then she returned to her antelope disguise and leaped off, yelping "wo-wo-wo". The hunter returned to the village and persuaded a party to help him follow the bloody tracks. They followed them through two woods and then the tracks ran into their village, and ended in the middle of it, behind the house of a woman. They heard a woman moaning in the house: "Mother, my arm, mother, my arm, Oh, I die". Then the hunter related how he had seen a woman in the plantation stealing the peanuts of others. "She was transformed into an antelope when I shot her in the arm. It must be this woman."

Soon afterwards she died and everyone realized that she was the one who had stolen the peanuts. The bandoki have many such tricks. Sometimes they put a nsafu seed into someone's plantation and all that grows there withers away. They could never play their tricks if it were not for the fact that they can disguise themselves as animals.

A man by the name of FUULA DYO (Exterminate it) related how he was initiated as a ndoki. It happened when he was out with NKEMBO and WAMBA, cutting poles for a house that was being built. They stacked the poles and prepared to carry them home. "When I put down the last ones I had cut down, I saw a snake coiled on top of the stack of poles that I had cut previously. It was a nduuna snake and the poles were covered with blood. I was frightened. Other snakes came and surrounded me. Then the two others said to me: Give, give. They asked for many of my relatives but I refused steadfastly. When I came close to being devoured by the snakes, I said that they could have my boy. That was how I came to be a ndoki."

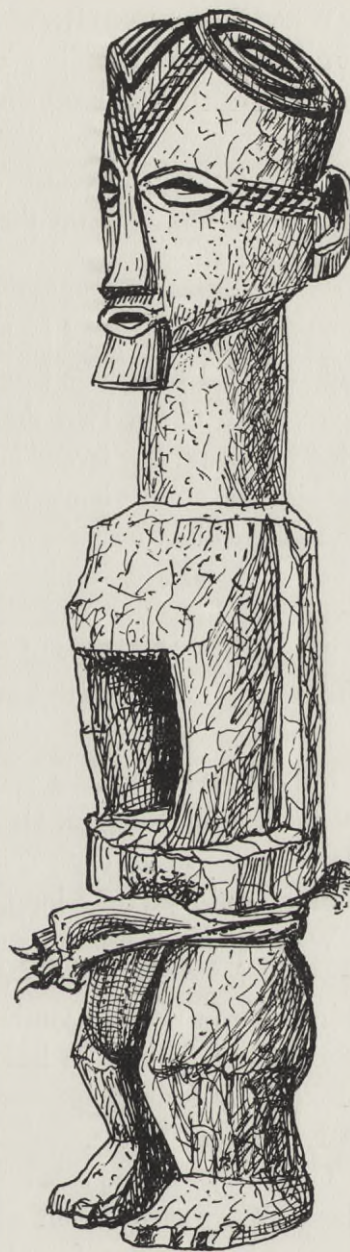


Fig. 41. Sculpture of an ancestor, Bemba in Kolo (Laman 526).

When FUULA DYO afterwards was given nkasa, it formed a lump in his stomach, preventing him from vomiting. They adjured him, trying to find out how he had been initiated as a ndoki. But all afternoon and evening he emptied his bowels of the nkasa. In the morning he was very weak. Nevertheless, he survived for five days. On the fifth they forced him to reveal how he had become a ndoki. After hearing his story they tied him up tightly with rattan. He collapsed on the ground and died prostrate. His two companions were also given nkasa.

The paramount chief had died. Another chief and the younger brothers of the deceased had survived him. The former accused the latter of being bandoki. In the morning they were given nkasa. First the elder brother died almost instantly. Another of the brothers tried to vomit, but it was not proper vomiting. Then they prepared a hen and other food for him. He ate the bananas but threw the hen under the bed. Then the others said: "Attack him! Give him more nkasa, because why should he be afraid of the hen if he were innocent?" They gave him more nkasa and he died and was burnt on the same spot where his elder brother had been burned.

Since times immemorial it has been known that a ndoki inevitably dies if he eats a hen after taking nkasa and so bandoki are often subjected to this test.

MAYUNDU MA NGOMA was a wily ndoki. He was accused of being a ndoki and of having eaten his grandchildren. He was given nkasa and eventually died. But he had four kundu glands, three in his chest and one in his throat and as he had hidden his kundu glands in a pool, he survived for a long, long time.

When MAYUNDU MA NGOMA had eaten nkasa, they gave him bilokolo (invoke) for the dead chiefs but he did not die. Then they gave him bilokolo for the dead men, the dead women and the dead youths but still he did not die. Then they gave him bilokolo for the dead girl child that he had eaten. They went on with their incantations and gave him bilokolo by four dangerous pools in the Lukula river and at the waterfall of Mpungu. Only then did he die.

Then they realized that it was in these waters that he had hidden the lives of his makundu glands. They carried him ashore, collected firewood, cut him up and burned him. When they cut him up, they found not only the glands but also, in his left calf, there was a mixture of medicines, with which they dosed the sick of the place. People were amazed at the wiliness of this ndoki.

A boy named NSUKU received kindoki from his mother. First she gave him human flesh with some fresh manioc and a few grains of salt. When he had eaten this, the mother told him to go into the woods and catch a mboma snake. He went and caught a live mboma, which his mother killed and cut up into small pieces. She took them along to the plain to eat them with other bandoki, who all had a mpidi basket with a kindoki shadow, taken from a human being.

To mark the conclusion of the kindoki training, a ndongila banana is eaten. The hair of a ndoki may only be cut by a fellow ndoki.

To attack a mboma snake and capture it alive proves that one is ready to attack a human being later, as the snake is as strong as it is stubborn.

A ndoki may attack people in many ways, for instance by clubbing them on the temple, across the nose, in the neck or the chest, or by tying up their arms and legs to subject them to all kinds of torture.

If someone's torment is excruciating, it means that the bandoki have given him to a temo partnership. Thereupon they put a noose round his neck, pulling it tight, put him into a magic mpidi basket and carry him to the plain. Other bandoki come and look in the basket to see if it contains a human shadow. If someone, who has been seized by bandoki, suffers from a fever, it means that they have placed him in a basket over the fire. One who suffers from a headache has been hit with a manioc stalk, whereas someone with aching arms or legs has been tied up with ropes. If someone has a stomach-ache, a thorn of the mfuma tree has penetrated there. Nose bleeds with fatal effects are caused by bandoki hitting the sufferer on the nose.

Many deaths in a village indicate the presence of male bandoki. The chief must then go outside the village, stark naked like the bandoki when they are out to set nightmares upon people; that is, they are stripped of their outer shell, which remains in bed while their inner being roams outdoors.

One of the reasons why people are eaten by bandoki may be that they are rich and refuse to share their wealth, another, envy of the many beautiful and admired wives they own.

The breast and the rump are the parts of the body preferred by bandoki. The thigh itself does not taste so well, being too sinewy, but the skin is removed and eaten. If there is any shortage of human flesh, they prefer to put away a hand and nibble from it now and then. The fingers are folded together according to the custom of the bandoki.

Not everyone who is attacked by a ndoki is eaten, as fellow bandoki may be opposed to the eating of certain people, especially if a wise village chief or some other venerable figure is involved. This may result in violent quarrels among the bandoki. Often, if someone is thus exempted, a substitute has to be found. In some cases, the nsala soul may already have been taken, but it must then be returned. If a temo partnership is to be compensated for such a loss and the ndoki in question has no other substitute to offer, he must give himself to the partnership.

## Secret Societies

The bankimba form a secret society that originated fairly recently in the coastal area. At the time of my arrival in the Congo, it had not spread further inland than Kibunzi. Later it gradually disappeared as no new branches were established.

In coastal Mayombe a double image is found which is called Ditafa Malwangu, Mbumba Kele or Ntafu a Nkimba. The two figures are called Matundu (the chief) and Malanda (his lieutenant). This image is often termed a nkisi, which it is not in the ordinary sense of the word. Sometimes it is called a nkisi as a denotation of pride. The chief is called Mabaaku as an expert teacher of the Kinkimba language.

When a sufficient number of adolescent boys are found in the villages lying within the orbit of the society, they express their desire to be initiated (*zungwa*, be swung) to their village chief and to the paramount chief. Grown men too, may be accepted for initiation, but hardly married men, as intercourse with women is forbidden to nkimba novices. The adult men only join in the latter part of the ceremonies. First of all, the novices cut down trees to prepare an enclosure called *vwala* or *nkooze* or, in kinkimba, *nsofo*. When it is completed, the initiation of the novices begins.

The initiation is set for a *nkenge* day, after a tax consisting of gin and palm-wine has been paid to the chiefs. The participants divide themselves into two groups and the high *nganga* sings, as he receives them:

“Give me, give me *mungwala* (a novice)  
E, give me, give me, woe is me,” etc.

One group sings:

“The dog lacks relatives,  
He lacks a *mvila* name.”

The second group answers:

“Eh, receive, receive *mungwala*  
The dog lacks relatives.  
He lacks a *mvila* name.”

The first group sings again:

"I return  
I return mungwala  
The dog lacks relatives" etc.

When the song is finished, the novices are stripped naked. One by one they are fetched by the high nganga, who holds them with his little finger, and places them against a ndungu drum, where he draws chalk lines round their arms, as the congregation sings:

"The ring of Malwangu  
It is broken  
It cannot be opened.  
Mbwange (sacred nkimba) is there.  
Maama, Matundu is chief", etc.

When all the novices have been adorned with chalk rings, everybody sings:

"They have drawn circles on him with the chalk  
Mbondo is chief, he is like the nganga.  
Take the nkisi and you take the enclosure", etc.

Then a chalk line is drawn round their navel, with the following song:

"Eh maama, from kolo (the navel) has  
this Mbumba come, from kolo.  
Let us not leave there.  
By kolo-o-o, by kolo-o-o ...", etc.

This song concluded, the novices are led round the yard. Each of them is held by two high banganga. Adult novices have an escort of four high banganga. They sing:

"Early tomorrow he will receive a name  
Kwe-e Ndyondyo.  
Eh, the child has left  
E, Kunda he will be called.  
Kwe-e Kunda, the child has left."

The initiates tell the novices, when everyone has been covered with chalk-marks: "Relax your bodies, you will not really die. It is just pretence." The ngongi bells ring and the ndungu, tangala, ngoma, dukulu and nkaako drums are beaten vigorously, accompanying the song which announces the killing of the novices:

"Ndyondyo, Ndyondyo  
The child has disappeared.  
E, he has gone, he has gone", etc.



Meanwhile, they swing the novices violently to and fro, this way and that, holding them by arms and feet or under the shoulders. The nkimba closes his eyes and feigns death. The banganga stamp on his face to show that he is dead. When he has become completely limp, they sling him over their shoulders and carry him off with a slow tread, as if he were dead. The women exclaim: "Truly, he is dead. See how limply his arms hang down", and burst into violent weeping. They place him on the ground with the following song:

"Oh, he is truly dead,  
he is truly dead.  
He is my brother.  
We cannot see you.  
Oh, he is truly dead."

When they have finished rolling the novices over the ground, they lift them and carry them solemnly to the crossroads outside the village. When the novices after this initiation return to the enclosure, a number of songs are sung, indicating that the real hardships begin tomorrow. The novices are not aware of their real meaning and regard them as just songs.

"Maama nganga,  
Early tomorrow over yonder  
We go, to be cruelly tormented.  
Mpwapvi (brother), e maama nganga."

"Maama nganga  
Matundu is chief  
Yonder in the nkoozo (enclosure) is mpwapvi."

All the drums and bells that will be required during the ceremonies, are carried into the enclosure. After each song, the banganga break kindling and build a fire. One of them has gone far away to steal a banana, and is called in a song:

"E balwangu, lwangu-e  
Bring the banana, we shall eat food,  
The pig maama e-e-e  
E, balwangu, lwangu e-e."

They keep up this song until he returns. The chiefs and other dignitaries stay on to drink palm-wine. A nzundu hammer must be kept on the premises, the place being called "where the nzundu is". They sing several songs, among them:

"E maama nganga e-e  
Whoever has been thoroughly taught,  
Who has been taught, E maama nganga,  
May he come and explain to the bankimba,  
E, maama nganga", etc.

The singing concluded, those who are to resurrect the novices are given a piece of chalk and "write" on the ground. This "writing" is called "the hole of Malwangu" and neither the uninitiated nor the women may set eyes upon it. When one hole has been drawn, a novice is placed beside it, while a nganga sings:

"The ring of Malwangu  
It is broken  
It cannot be opened.  
Mbwangu is there", etc.

Then chalk-marks are drawn around his navel, to the following song:

"E maama, from the navel has  
This Mbumba come, from the navel.  
Let us not leave there", etc.

When the song is finished, the novice is laid down by the hole. At first, he lies on his back, while a song is being sung announcing his resurrection. Meanwhile, innumerable songs are sung for the crowd that has gathered to see the novices rise from the dead. Those who are to resurrect them, lead the songs, to show off their cleverness:

"E maama, explain (actually "stretch out")  
The mboma ndongo snake.  
E, explain.  
Tell us, have you learnt well, tell us  
Have you been taught to explain  
Mboma ndongo", etc.

The one to resurrect the novice lets a kele sculpture roll from his legs over his body onto his face, where he shakes it. He repeats this twice. Then he turns the novice over and lets the kele sculpture roll thrice, as before, from the legs over the back onto the neck of the novice, and shakes it. "Ngonso Bwamvi nleefe (Matundu)." The novice rises at once and another takes his place by a new hole, with a new name. One by one, the procedure is repeated with all the novices. At length, the high nganga is ready to roast the bananas. If there are five nkimba novices, they are given five "fingers" from a bunch. They mash the bananas together with chalk and then the nkimba novices all line up, while the high nganga addresses them: "As you have heard that the bankimba eat pork, you cannot consume a piece of lusila (a slice of pork), as this is chalk. Eat it." They are given only chalk to eat. Those who don't finish their portion are beaten. After that, they roast the pig of Lwangu, represented by nkadi-nkadi leaves, over the fire. The novices are told to close their eyes. When they hear the roasting leaves crackle "nazoo-wa-ya", they say: "It is the fat crackling".

Their meal of chalk finished, the novices have their bodies and shaven heads rubbed all over with chalk. Then the initiators say: "You asked for nkimba. Now you shall have both

boar and sow." They hold up the nsyensye symbolizing the boar and flog the novices with it. The sow is the chalk they previously consumed. After this a song is sung:

"E-e, that I saw  
E-e, that I saw  
What I am taught, Mbwangwa  
Stranger, e maama."

The song over, Baku whips every one of them on the bottom with the whisk. They wonder aghast; "Why should we be treated thus?", but the bakimba do not answer until they come to the vwala, where they again chastise the novices, telling them: "We have all been treated in this manner and the song explains what you shall experience. This we tell you, strangers."

To prevent any nkimba from revealing what happens, they are made to swear an oath, holding the double image, never to reveal any part of the ceremonies.

In an old village square, the bankimba's head is shaven and their body and head smeared with chalk. Thereupon they return to their village, all of them covered with chalk. The high nganga carries the nkoole drum, beating on it so the village may know that the bankimba have arrived. The whole village turns out to look at the bankimba and to learn their new names. When the bankimba arrive at the crossroads on their way to the village, they sing a song in the kinkimba language and crouch low on the ground. They may not turn their breast to the sky. They keep up their song until they reach the courtyard where the drum is. They may not let their gaze wander, as they sing in unison:

"Ceve, ceveru ve, ceve, e ceve  
Ceve kuru ceve, ceve kuru ceve", etc.

On their arrival in the courtyard, the bankimba form a line and sing one song after the other. After that, the high nganga reveals their new names in a song. Every nkimba in turn hears his name and answers immediately: "Kweze (yes) zyororo". They are given their names in the following song:

"Reveal his name  
Who is he?  
NLEFE, make him obedient.<sup>1</sup>

When the bankimba have been told their names, they return to the vwala. A number of high banganga head the procession, after them march the bankimba, in their turn followed by the maidens, with the other high banganga concluding the procession. They sing:

"They have gone, gone to sleep on the ground,  
MATUNDU has gone to sleep on the ground."

<sup>1</sup> The song is repeated for every nkimba, with a different name each time. Instead of NLEFE, the name may be MALWARA, NEYARUMVA (=NCYAMA), DAFA, NEIFU (=NSIKU), RUDEBWA (=LUTEETE), etc.

The song is repeated, introducing the new names in turn into the text. When they have reached the vwala, they rest and after a while food is brought to them. This food may not be seasoned with salt, salt representing father Malwangu (the nkisi itself). A song instructs the bankimba to use ashes instead. Then yuuma is put before them and mixed with ashes. The bankimba are told: "Eat now". They decline, but another song tells them that they must eat and have but to comply:

"E-e, this I have experienced,  
E-e, this I have experienced", etc.

If anyone remains obstinate, he is flogged until he gives in and eats.

The bankimba must observe several prohibitions during their stay in the vwala. They may not eat fish, manioc leaves, washed manioc, mayimba or tiba bananas or pepper. They must drink in solitude in the woods. They may not touch a woman, nor an uninitiated. They may not dress in cloth, nor be abroad in daylight, nor show themselves to the uninitiated, who must pay 2 or 3 hens if they happen to meet a nkimba. The following song always accompanies the enumeration of the prohibitions:

"E, pay attention, pay attention to, maama  
Follow conscientiously  
His prohibition rules, taata  
Malwangu-e-e-e  
His prohibition rules", etc.

This song is repeated frequently, as a reminder of the rules.

Once the bankimba have entered the vwala, they are not allowed to return home until their hair has grown out and they have mastered the language and the dances. A nkimba who ventures to speak his usual language, either within the vwala or during a visit to the village, is chastised.

The high nganga sleeps in the vwala with the bankimba, as it is feared that they may be attacked by nsimvi spirits (bankuyu) and thrown on the top of a palm-tree. It is only when there is a large group of bankimba, that they are allowed to sleep by themselves.

As soon as the bankimba are within the enclosure, the women who are to prepare their food in the lukanga place are selected. These cooks are called MABENGI, MYEZI, MBENGI-MBENGI, NDAMBI-NDAMBI and MADEEDE. They prepare all food in the lukanga, as they are not allowed to do it inside a house. All meals are eaten to the accompaniment of songs and ignorance of the appropriate song means forfeiture of the food. When a woman has prepared a portion of food (sansikisa), she beats on a mbudikidi drum. The bankimba ask: "Namwa?" (who?). The woman answers: "I". "Wabu ngweni zyangane?" (whence have you come?). "It is I who have come with sansikisa. If NSIKU is there, let him come and fetch his food." The bankimba urge NSIKU: "Ngebo kimpwa NSIKU. Navatemvi ku lukanga, dafila wazuluku mabwefo." (Brother NSIKU, go and fetch your food in the lukanga). As he comes to fetch his food, he calls out: "Damvuka ngebo. Ngono i vadafila mazuku mab-

wefo" (Begone, I am coming to fetch my food), whereupon the woman hides herself until he has emptied the pot.

A nkimba eats with a strip of calabash cut like a spoon, or with a leaf folded in a similar shape, or with his fingers.

Occasionally, the cooks also come to the lukanga to dance, sometimes continuing until midnight or even all through the night.

In addition to the songs and dances, the bankimba learn to weave pineapple cloth, sew nkutu bags, tap palm-wine, fish, hunt, catch rats and build solid houses. The houses are not furnished with a front wall and have no door. They also plait some sort of mansanda cloth from pineapple, to gird their loins, sometimes adorning it in front with short twines.

The insignia of the bankimba are formed by their makonki pipes, nkooko drums, wooden bivudu-vudi trumpets, nsiba pipes and nkwanana pipes, with which they give warning of their approach, so that the uninitiated will hide as they pass. Any outsider who meets a nkimba must pay a fine.

Once inside the enclosure, the bankimba are continuously chastised and tormented. Their tears flow freely, but they beat the drums and make music, so that their pain and sorrow might easily be mistaken for happiness. They have to render their songs crouched down on the ground, otherwise they will be flogged on the back.

As soon as they are inside the vwala, they must begin to learn the nkimba language and certain songs in the form of questions (kumwa). They must answer the questions in chorus. MATUNDA is the chief and KINKELE his lieutenant.

Whenever a nkimba visits the village or meets outsiders elsewhere, he may only speak in nkimba. If he talks Kongo, or answers questions in that language, he is reported and flogged.

A few of the interrogative songs, which are first learnt in Kongo, are reproduced below.

|            |                             |   |
|------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Question:  | E kungulu (dya ntu)         | Eh, the shaven (head)                   |
| (in Kongo) | e diviidi tuyu              | has been ravaged by fire                |
|            | Kamba, Simbi kisiidi bo twe | Say, has Simbi done that, do you think? |

|         |                          |  |
|---------|--------------------------|--|
| Answer: | E, kungulu dimfiidi tuyu | My bald head that was singed                 |
|         | E taata Malwangu         | E, father Malwangu                           |
|         | Unsiidi bwabwe           | Has done that to me                          |
|         | E, kungulu diviidi tuyu. | E, the shaven head has been ravaged by fire. |

|             |                            |                            |
|-------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Question:   | Ndumvere uviiri ugyovi     | The head is singed         |
| (in Nkimba) | Somvura sivi kisyepi dwabu | Name the one who did that. |

|         |                             |                                      |
|---------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Answer: | Ndumvere umpiiri ugyori     | My bald head has been singed         |
|         | Tafa ma Wamvu unzempi dwabu | Father Malwangu has done that to me. |

|           |  |  |
|-----------|--|--|
| Question: | E, Maama ngang-e — his foot                            |  |
|           | He does not set on the ground.                         |  |
|           | Edi nzwenzwe (interjection imitating sound of trumpet) |  |
|           | E, maame ngang-e                                       |  |

Answer: E maama nganga, the pigeon  
Ndingi does not set foot on the ground.  
Edi nzwenzwe  
E maame ngang-e.

Question: Something has bitten me on the ankle (Achilles tendon)  
Brothers -e, Woe is me -e?

Answer: I have been bitten on the ankle  
Brothers, woe is me.  
A scorpion in the woodpile.  
Haven't you seen it?  
Brothers, e, woe is me.

This last question may be repeated any number of times, with each answer naming something different that stings. After that, it may be varied by replacing "ankle" with another word.

Question: Ngungu (spider producing loud noise) with his rattle  
Has gone to spin his web.  
He has gone to climb down.  
Look maama, ngungu with his rattle.

Answer: Maama, ngungu with his rattle  
He has come to spin a web.  
Maama, the bubi spider climbs down.  
Maama, I saw your ngungu coming  
With his rattle, spinning his web.

There are innumerable such songs intended for the instruction of the bankimba. They explain how the kele sculpture came to be made up of two parts, how the nsasi rattle sounds, what the plaits, the eyes, the ears and the dress of the kele sculpture are like. Other songs refer to certain customs and prohibitions, such as those forbidding any nkimba to touch his sister's breasts, or to shake father Malwangu by the shoulders.

When the bankimba have been in the enclosure for several months, sometimes even for as long as a year, they are allowed to go out to the lukanga. There they make their mazyanda skirts, that hang down from the shoulders and cover the entire body, leaving only the feet free. These skirts are made from palm branches stripped of their leaves, filled out with leafy palmtwigs, with the leaves pointing downwards. Their head is covered by a mask (nzyozyo), with two holes for the eyes and adorned with multicoloured figures.

Again a sumptuous feast is held, with drinking, singing and dancing. The bakimba and their chiefs, carrying their insignia and streamers, head the procession to the place where the feast will be held. The women get themselves ready at a little distance.

The singing and dancing commences. The bankimba join in two by two, like the cooks or other young women. Afterwards, palm-wine is drunk while they render songs. If a nkimba forgets a song, his palm-wine is poured over his head. After this, the festive meal begins.

When the bankimba have mastered their secret language, the time has come for them to be tried by the nsimvi spirits (bankuyu). First the high nganga comes and throws stones on the roof. If they yell and shriek, they are acquainted with the nsimvi spirits. If the kungu owl cries, the bankimba must likewise scream in chorus. The youngest bankimba sleep in the middle for protection, because the story is told that one of the youngest once upon a time was captured and seated on top of a wild palm. If they go to the woods, their chiefs must hold them by the hand. A nsimvi spirit may seek refuge in a tree, when it is pursued.

Misa leaves, for instance those of the nsafu and lumbangu-mbangu, are useful in getting to know these spirits. If they refuse to leave the bankimba in peace, the leaves are burnt at night. If they persist, the chief may go round in the village and in the vwala, calling a warning to any ndoki that may be among the bankimba, to desist from transforming himself into a nkuyu spirit.

Before their departure from the vwala, the bankimba are required to cut a very tall nkwanza pole. They dig a hole for it and raise it by means of long ropes. Some of them climb in trees to pull at the ropes, as the pole is heavy and unwieldy. The new initiates, for whose sake the vwala was built, must hold the lower end of the pole and guide it into the hole. When the pole is raised and secured with ropes, their cries of wolo-wolo-wolo rent the air. They fire salvos and caper around, because now their ordeals in the vwala are over and they can look forward to a lavish feast and dancing. But first, an auspicious day is chosen to bury makuta hair medicine at the foot of the nkwanza pole. To this end, the bankimba cut their nails and shave off every last hair on their head, in their armpits and on the pubes. This ceremony is followed by a great feast, where the palm-wine flows and the bankimba are free to do whatever they want.

When they are ready to break up from the vwala, it is the custom of the bankimba to run riot in the villages. Before that, however, they furnish the houses they have built, after which they get a store of palm-wine to drink in the woods, where they must cut down a tree to carve a mbondo figure from. When the mbondo sculpture is ready, every family with a nkimba must buy beautiful cloth as a celebration gift. Chiefs and other dignitaries come from near and far to take part in this celebration for the bankimba, who are plied with food and drink. The dancers too get their share.

Finally, a day is selected to burn the enclosure and its houses. The night before, no one in the village is allowed to sleep. The local people and the bankimba dance till dawn and sing the laments of the Muserongo until the first cock crows. The bankimba are elated and free to do whatever they feel like. The uninitiated hide in their houses. The elder initiates join their younger fellows and together they go from house to house, singing songs reviling the inhabitants and throwing their every defect at them in the most vicious terms. They empty their bowels in front of the houses. They may steal and try to seize the women. Their revellings continue through the night. One of them may start the following song:

“E, maama mbondo  
He has died  
Shall I ever meet him in the vwala.”

All bankimba join in and at the end of the song they shout in chorus: "Say, is it we? Yes, it is we. But whence have you come?" In that way they bewail the mbondo sculpture all through the night, weeping and shouting incessantly.

Meanwhile, others have gone to the woods where they pull up a banana, roots and all. Its leaves are tied together, because it is the banana planted by father MALWANGU, which was planted and shot up, growing a spreading bunch of ripened fruit. The women are allowed to come and look at it, signifying the end of the vwala.

Early next morning, the full assembly of bankimba and banganga gathers on the shore, where a fire is built. The bankimba line up beside the water. After the high nganga has stirred the water, everyone must take a drink from it. The high nganga orders: "Zyana, zyana" (urinate) and everyone urinates simultaneously. Before that, however, MATUNDU, MALANDA, MAKWALA, BAKU and NCYAMA must pass their water where they stand apart from the rest. These new initiates are then taken out into the middle of the stream. MATUNDU is taken by the scruff of his neck and dipped (baptized — botika) under the water three times (brrr kwezi-e), after which the procedure is repeated with each of the others in turn. After this ceremony, salvos are fired and the village rejoices, knowing that everyone has urinated muddy water and thereby has been found innocent of theft, adultery or other offences. No married man has slept with his wife. If anyone is found guilty, no salvos are fired. Finally, the bankimba start washing the chalk off their body, scrubbing far into the day until they are scrupulously clean.

Seeing the shingly clean bankimba enter the water again, the people believe them to have been licked by the Malwangu snake. This snake never bites anyone. It eats palmkernels and sucks the juice out of sugar-cane.

The bathing ceremony over, they return to the village by a different road cleared for them. They march to the beat of the ndungu drum that sounds *ngi-ngi-ngi, ba-ba-ba*. At the crossroads near the village, they halt and drape themselves with their beautiful cloth and adorn themselves with rings round their legs, caps on their head, bead necklaces, and



Fig. 42. *Nkisi, Sundi in Lolo*  
(Laman 1256).



tasseled cords around their wrists. Decked out in all their finery, they proceed to the courtyard of the chief, where they are seated on the nkwala mats spread for them. The whole village is silent as they pass. The malembe, as the bankimba, are now called, approach slowly with bowed heads. No lembe (nkimba) may look upwards or aside until the procession has reached the courtyard of the chief. They may not sit down of their own accord, but must wait until they are placed on their mats. Presently, they are ordered into the house to eat any food that they despise. The food is given to them on a stick. After this, everyone may start eating. The chief presents his guests with the gifts he has selected for them and bids them farewell.

The malembe are also led to the market-place, where they join two by two in a dance with the women who prepared their food, the latter likewise in pairs. The dance over, they are returned to their homes in the village. They act like small children, don't recognize their mothers and sisters and understand nothing, so that they must be taught everything anew. They may without shame take off their loin-cloths in front of the women, or wish to sleep with their sister or mother and say the most incredible things. Their behaviour is intended to make the people realize that they have truly been resurrected from the dead.

The next morning, the high banganga divide the rewards, which the bankimba received in the vwala for accusing women of crimes. At that the vwala is over.

One of the dancing-songs of the bankimba is worded as follows:

“E, you who cook for the zimbwangi (brothers)  
Take away the jiggers.  
E, my friend (neighbour), e-e, take away  
The jiggers, my friend, e.e”, etc.

Another song runs like this:

“E, Nkuzumba (paramount chief) has lost weight  
by watching the ceremony.  
Bankimba-e-e,  
By watching the festival they held.  
E, he did no work at all,  
Just watched the festival,  
Bankimba-e-e.  
E, dance, don't fall behind.”

The following song is sung by women reviling each other:

“E, sagging breasts, e NLWANGU  
Whither shall you go.  
A short neck, e NLWANGU  
Whither shall you go.  
Scawny legs, e NLWANGU”, etc.

The one leading the song introduces one physical defect after the other into the text. The bankimba dance in pairs in a circle formed by the women.

The main purpose of the nkimba initiation is to teach the novices the language, which is a useful means of deceiving the uninitiated in trade and legal proceedings. When they arrive in a strange village and set up their kele sculpture, everyone in the neighbourhood must produce whatever palm-wine or food they have.

On the other hand, the bankimba also learn to build solid houses, weave beautiful cloth and make other handsome objects, in addition to which they are taught obedience.

| <i>Nkimba :</i>                | <i>Kongo :</i>        | <i>English :</i>                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------|
| Malabula                       | Nlangu                | Water                            |
| Ntombe                         | Malavu                | Palm-wine                        |
| Dinkafala                      | Nsunga                | Tobacco                          |
| Ncyaminika                     | Mankondo              | Banana                           |
| Nkubazi                        | Nsusu                 | Fowl                             |
| Mefe                           | Nkombo                | Goat                             |
| Mazuluku                       | Madia                 | Food                             |
| Katubu, katubwa                | Nkutu                 | Food-bag                         |
| Lemvele?                       | Mweni?                | Do you see?                      |
| Nkemvele                       | Awa                   | No                               |
| Dafidi?                        | Bakidi?               | Received?                        |
| Malemva                        | Sambwadi              | Seven                            |
| Pidipi-pidi                    | Nungu                 | Pepper                           |
| Unzyanika                      | Umpaana               | Give me                          |
| Dyafla kwabuso                 | Wenda kuuna           | Go there                         |
| Zefa ndimvi                    | Yambula               | Cease                            |
| Wabu ngweni i va temfele?      | Kwa keele?            | Where has he gone?               |
| Kwa busa i vatemfele           | Koko keele            | There he has gone                |
| Namwa bwamvi?                  | Nani ndyewo?          | Who is that?                     |
| Ngono mwa                      | Mono kwami            | It is I                          |
| Wabu ngweni zyangane?          | Kwe utuukidi?         | Where do you come from?          |
| Ku ngwala ndyafidi             | Ku vata ntuukidi      | I come from the village          |
| Bazyanikini mazuluku kwa buso? | Bakuvaana madia koko? | Did he give you food there?      |
| Nkemvele kwamvi                | Nkatu, naana yo       | No, not at all                   |
| Nkumwa i zyangane kwabu ko     | Nkanu wa koko         | They are trying a law-suit there |
| Bwambasa                       | Twala                 | Bring                            |
| Zyanika                        | Vaana                 | Give                             |
| Nabutumwa                      | Ngudi a nganga Nabaku | Paramount nganga Nabaku          |
| Kimpwa                         | Mpangi                | Brother                          |
| Madyumba                       | Nzo zau               | Their house                      |
| Ngebo                          | Ngeye                 | You (sing.)                      |
| Zidikidi?                      | Wilu?                 | Do you hear?                     |
| Kweze                          | Inga                  | yes                              |
| Kwa namwa?                     | Kwa nani?             | To whom?                         |
| Wabu ngweni uvadyamva?         | Kwe una kwenda?       | Where are you going?             |
| Namwa?                         | E nani?               | For whom?                        |
| Damvuka                        | Katuka                | Begone                           |

|                    |           |             |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------|
| Lemva              | Tala      | To look on  |
| Zuluka             | Dia       | To eat      |
| Diomvele, temvele? | Teela?    | Say?        |
| Nkemvele kwamvi    | Ve kwandi | No          |
| Nsafaru            | Mbeele    | Knife       |
| Mbwamvu            | Muntu     | Human being |
| Lemvu mwa          | Nkento    | Woman       |
| Matefa             | Madia     | Food        |
| Unzyana            | Umpana    | Give me.    |

NDEMBO is both the name of an ordinary nkisi, that of a nkisi of the ruling power and of a nkisi of a former secret society south of the Congo.

The initiation rites of this society symbolized the death and resurrection of the novice, who was to be taught everything anew in his new life. They did not adopt a special language, although they used an occasional expression that was a distortion of a Kongo word. They built a special enclosure, called vela, but this is done for many other minkisi.

According to BENTLY (*Pioneering on the Congo I*, p. 285), the society had both male and female members. They went around naked, "as they had no sense of shame", which led to an immoral and shameless way of life. The number of novices varied from twenty to as much as several hundred. Their days were spent in singing and dancing and ecstatic orgies.

It seems likely that other minkisi, like Mbinda, for instance, used to be the centre of similar societies with special ceremonies, which have gradually slipped into simpler forms, as exemplified by the small enclosure erected for the nkisi and the small number of people involved in its manufacture.

## Good and Evil

The natives have a very real notion of what is good and evil, right, wrong, false, shameful and so on. But in judging these matters they consider first of all their own kanda and nzo. Outsiders are regarded as strangers and enemies; against them they may behave and act as seems best for their own kanda. Thus to deceive, cheat, steal and the like, when the victim is outside the kanda, is even considered laudable, if the culprit is not found out. Feelings of regret, sorrow and shame regarding acts against outsiders are manifested if one is found out and has to suffer for them.

In the kanda there are often those who want to steal and do what is wrong. But they are often punished very severely. Some humble themselves and beg for mercy with wailing and cries. But others do not bother to do so, but pay the fines exacted, and then everything is all right again.

To infringe nkisi's laws, kandu-prohibitions and other regulations is serious, as the consequences may be sickness and even death. In connection with such offences a strong feeling of sin with pangs of conscience and consciousness of guilt is often felt. The culprit may thus, through suggestion, become sick and suffer deeply.

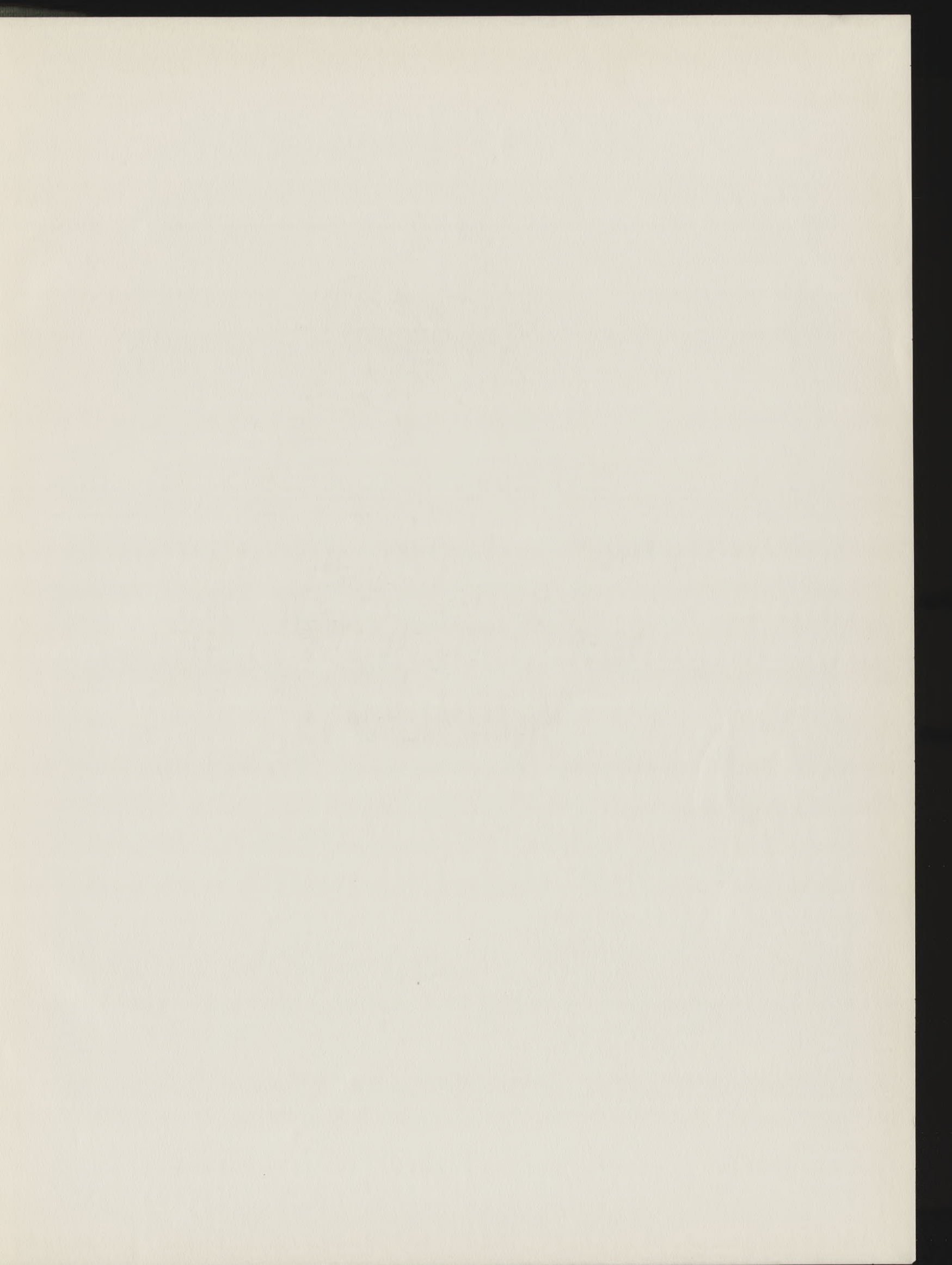
To show pity, generosity etc. is much appreciated within the kanda. Such persons are praised, given a good burial and posthumous renown. Such ways of acting towards strangers who are traders and come to their friends are also much appreciated. Strangers outside the kanda are not shown much pity and love unless some special benefit accrues therefrom.

That religion plays a big rôle in the public and private life of the people appears from the ancestor cult, the nkisi cult and the natives' belief in man's dependence on evil spirits and bandoki. This implies that in all the circumstances of life people must carefully meet the demands imposed upon them by their ancestors, must obey the behests of the bakisi given when they have called upon them in sickness or other need, and protect themselves with all caution against the evil powers surrounding them, both dead and living.

The real motive, however, for the Sundi's religious behaviour seems to be entirely egoistic, and what is mainly taken into account is what may be useful to each personally and to his kanda.



Fig. 43. Nkisi Musansi, Sundi in Ludima (Laman 1081).



1894  
10th April  
11th April  
12th April  
13th April  
14th April

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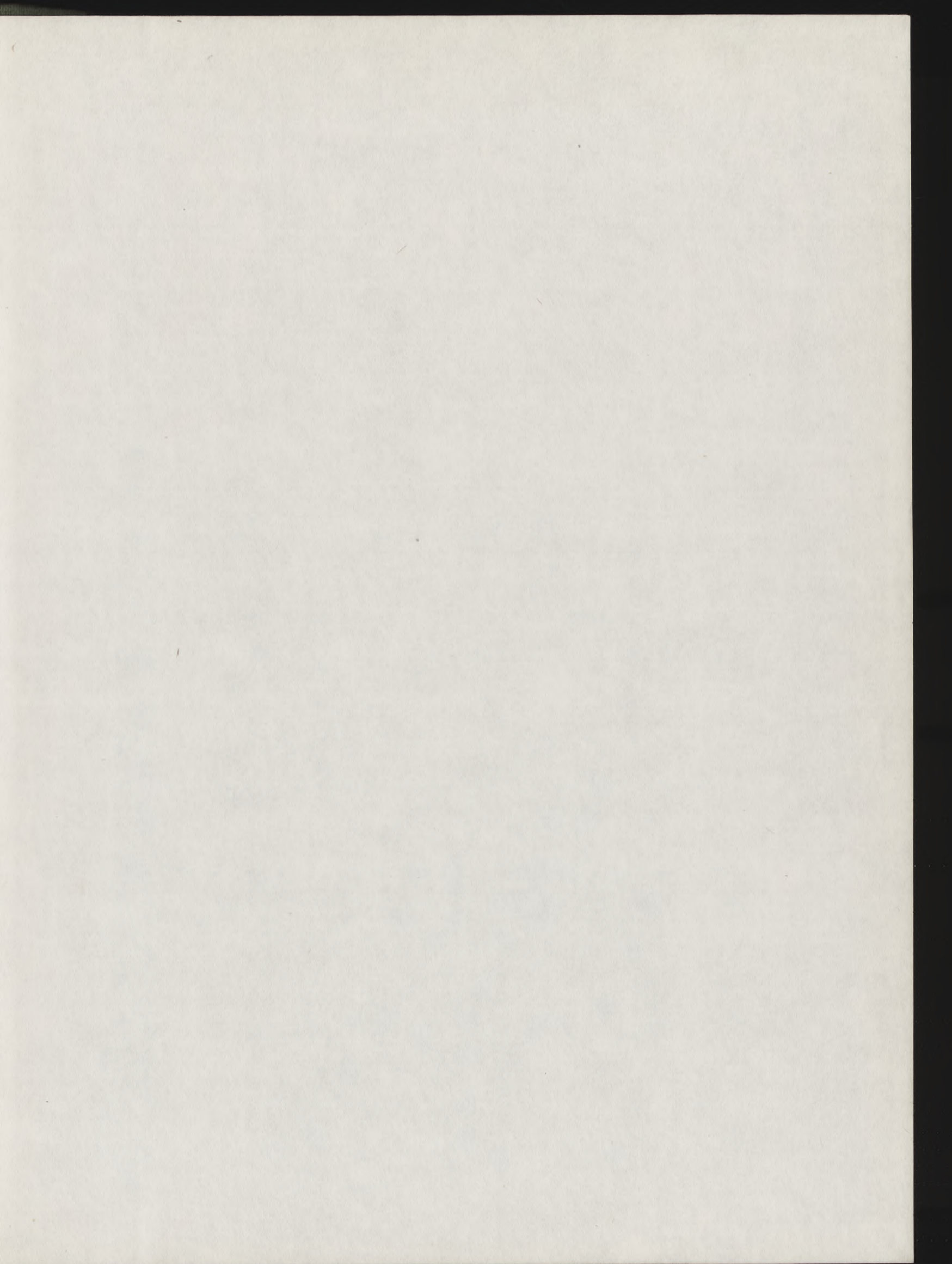
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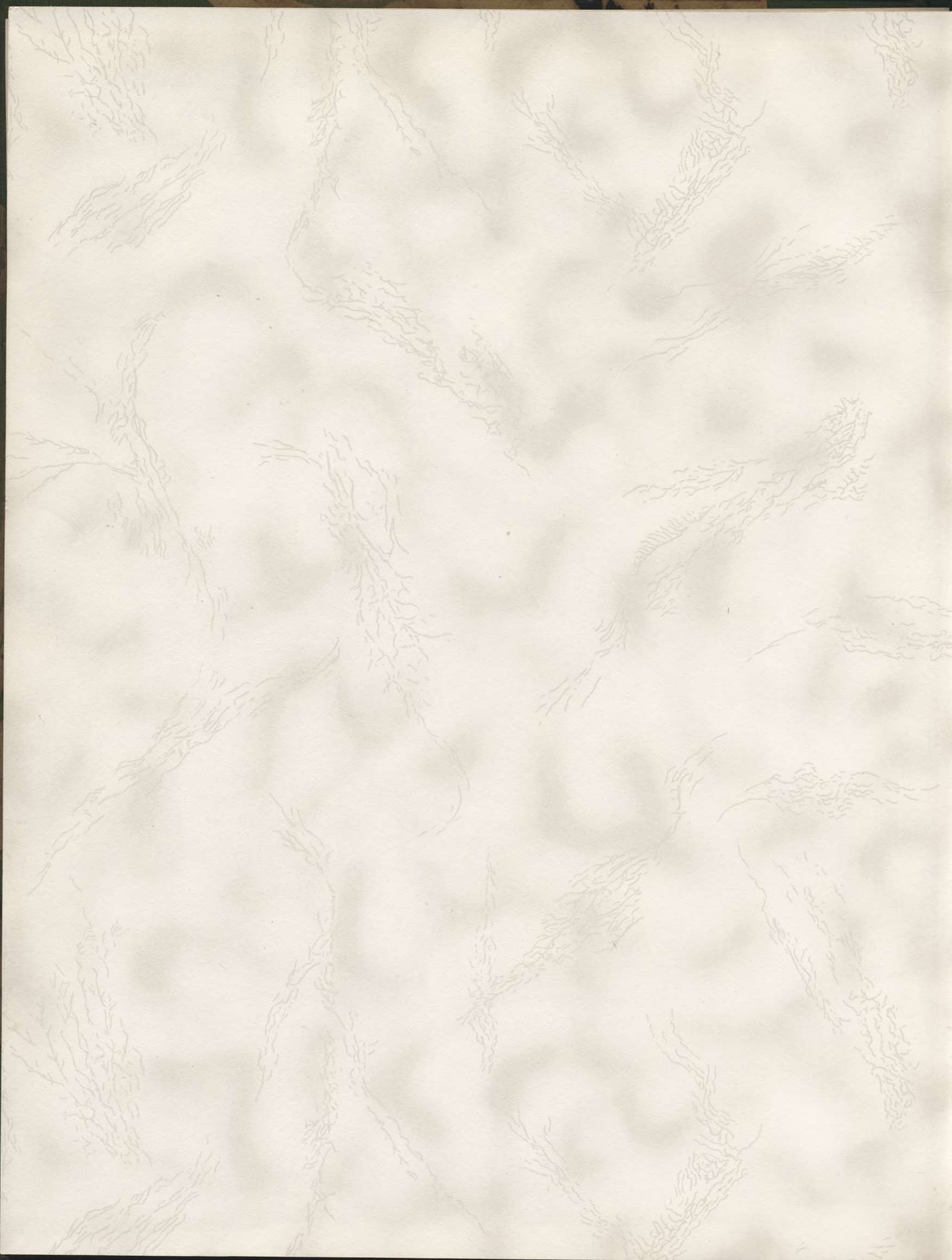
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