

# Chibangiri

(A jute day mask from the Mua area)

## Themes

- 1) Female infertility
- 2) Jealousy/envy
- 3) Witchcraft

## Etymology

**Chibangiri** means, 'a bangle'. This is a euphemism for a hygienic towel.



## Description

**Chibangiri** features a type of Kapoli very similar to Hololiya. The mask is made of a piece of jute painted with some black spots. A tuft of feathers tops the mask. Additional details can be added like round eyes, a small nose and a big red mouth with teeth. The dancer wears a kilt like that of Kapoli (a short kilt made of fibres or sisal), and he moves with a whip in his hand. The character dances for burial and initiation ceremonies. His repertoire is limited to a few songs. In a funeral context he sings: 1) *"All the elders have died. Leave me behind because I am still a child (I am not ready to die yet)."* The song voices the complaints of a younger person who realises that all his senior relatives have passed away. He is afraid that he may be next. The second song is sung at the initiation ceremony. It says: 2) *"Give me back my **Chibangiri** (bangle). Give me, give me! Come back, **Chibangiri!**"* or *"The **Chibangiri** is mine! Give me, give me! I will give my **Chibangiri** to Mwale here!"* The song talks about an angry husband who has divorced his wife and has taken everything she owns, even her hygienic towel (*chibangiri*, also called a bangle). He will use it for making medicine in order to cast a spell on her and to prevent her from remarrying or having children with another man.

**Chibangiri** portrays an evil spirit bent on destruction of the family group. It leaves nothing behind and exterminates everyone. The ancestors warn the villagers that hatred opens the door to evil spirits (*ziwanda*). Through witchcraft, they will seek revenge and do evil to their relatives. They will, in this manner, compromise the very survival of their own group.

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## Songs

1) "Akuluakulu adatha onse, lekeleke, lekeleke. N'kali mwana ine."

2) "**Chibangiri** n'changa! Patse patse (2x)! Bwerera **Chibangiri!**" or "Ndikapatse a Mwale wa **Chibangiri!**"

## Source

Interview in 1991