

Chilungalunga

(A day structure from the Ntchisi area)



(miniature model)

Themes

1) Rights of/respect for the handicapped

Etymology

Chilungalunga means, 'that which is straight and beautiful'.

Description

This large day structure is several metres long and activated by two dancers. The frame is made in the shape of a four-legged animal whose species is difficult to identify. The frame is covered with bird feathers, instead of fur, to indicate lameness. This is emphasised by the fact that the dancers move around the *bwalo* in a manner that shows some sort of disability. The men sing, "*Straight he/she was born, straight.*" This is irony: they imply that, in fact, he/she was born crippled. The song voices the complaints of a handicapped person who is being mocked and abused.

Chilungalunga instructs people to respect those who are born lame and crippled. One should be thankful for being born sound of body and be aware of the Chewa proverb: "*Beautiful he was born, lame he became.*" One should not mock disabled people if one does not want to be mocked tomorrow.

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Kungoni Centre of Culture and Art, Mua Parish, P. O. Box 41, Mtakatika, Malawi

Song

*“Lungalunga (2x) kubadwa **Chilungalunga.**”*

Source

Interview in 1991