

M'tu wa ngoma

(A black and white striped day mask from Khwidzi)



Themes

1) Limits & restrictions of *chikamwini* system

Etymology

M'tu wa ngoma means, 'the kudu's head'.

Description

This mask (80 cm.) portrays a kudu bull. It has two large horns. The muzzle of the animal is striped black and white and has a beard like that of a goat. The headgear on the back of the mask is made of rags. The dancer wears a bulky gown, armllets and leglets. He carries a club and a long knife. When he dances, he bends his head forward and runs after the women as if he wanted to impale them on his horns. The men sing, "*A wild beast that even frightens its own relatives. No! Today (he has really become) a wild beast.*" The song seems to portray a husband who found that the elders of his wife's family group had already died when he came to reside in the village of his wife. At the beginning of his marriage, he behaved submissively, and the family group of his wife praised his discretion and good manners. Soon, however, he took advantage of the weak leadership in the

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family and started imposing his own ideas, intimidating the younger males of the group and ruling the entire family. He resembled the kudu bull, which displays with the mane erect and the horns vertical. The character of the kudu reminds husbands that they have no authority of their own at their wives' villages and that they should behave like guests.

Song

"Chilombo (2x) choopsya eni ake! lai lero m'chilombo chilombo!"

Source

Interview in 1992