

Palibe wondiuzza

(A night banana leaf covered mask from the Mua area)

Themes

- 1) Importance of family ties
- 2) Sharing of beer
- 3) Sharing of information about rituals
- 4) Unity & harmony

Etymology

Palibe wondiuzza means, 'Nobody tells me.'



Description

This character is a type of Kampini that was popular in the 1950s. He wears a head cover made of green or dried banana leaves and a kilt made of papyrus. The back of the papyrus leaves is white. They are purposely turned inside out in order to give **Palibe wondiuzza** the appearance of a spirit. The character carries a club, knife and stick, expressing the role of castigation by the spirit world.

Palibe wondiuzza dances for funeral and commemoration rites. During the latter he appears when beer is being made. In the late afternoon of the day on which the ferment is added to the brew (*tsiku losambula*), he roams around the house where the deceased lived (*masiye*) and the shed where the beer is brewed (*chikute*). He swings his arms to one side, and then the other, to show that someone has been forgotten or left out while he growls with a loud voice, "*Nobody tells me about the death of the child!*" The song states that someone has not been informed about the funeral. He scolds the family group which has neglected to inform the father or the brother about the death of his own child or that of his sister's child. **Palibe wondiuzza** is a spokesman from the spirit world for the forgotten relatives of the deceased. The relative may have heard the news of the death from strangers or overheard people mourning. If he does make it to the funeral, the person will stand up during the panegyric as a member of the family group and will publicly voice his grievance. If he is forgotten later when the commemoration rite will take place, he will put a case (*mlandu*) to the family group.

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Palibe wondiuza's presence at these events expresses the power of castigation of the spirit world for breaking the harmony and the trust within the family group. All those who are related by blood or by marriage are brothers and sisters to each other. They should show the courtesy of informing each other of all important rituals.

Song

*"Palibe wondiuz*a za imfa ya mwana!"

Source

Interviews in 2000 and 2001