MALAWI'S HOMER **Version 2026.11.11**

Translated into English from:

BWAMPINI

A. E. Dziko

1937 – 2005

Chichewa (*New Orthography*) Edition **1975**

Bookland International

Kenyatta Drive, Chitawira, Private Bag 140, Blantyre

ISBN 978-99960-13-38-6

by:

Richard L. Hewitt and **Neverson Chikusa**

Airwing, Lilongwe

Lammas Day, 2026

https://bwampini.fritillary.org

Za M’katimu

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Chapter 01

The Realm of the Azimu

[01.01]

There was a gathering of the realm of heaven, **Ntheradi**, where people of heavenly wisdom had their abode. They were not actually people, even if they had bodies, because of their profound wisdom.

[01.02]

The name of these people was **Azimu**. The gathering was convened by the king of all the **Azimu**, whose name was **Tinjiwa**. He had a wife, whose name was **Ngapagwa**. He had two 'brothers', **Chimphanza** and **Ndomondo**, who were, in fact, the sons of his sister.

[01.03]

Tinjiwa had begotten many children. The first born was **Mbamba**, a sharp-witted boy and one who loved the forge. The second born was a girl, whose name was **Mziisi**. Even though she was a girl, she was enormously strong. Her strength surpassed all men.

[01.04]

The third was a boy, a very good looking boy, whose name was **Mapiko**. He had a light and slender body. In fleetness of foot he had no peer. Since all **Azimu** possessed from birth the ability to fly, he too flew so fast that not even a pigeon could have competed with him.

[01.05]

Hard on **Mapiko**'s heels came **Ching'aning'ani**, a beautiful girl whose beauty made a man to forget many things. After her was born an attractive boy, whose name was **Chezichezi**. The skill of singing and of sculpture was his. **Chezichezi** knew how to speak and to act wisely, just like his father.

[01.06]

There were those **Azimu** who married, others who remained unmarried. But because of lack of increase in their tribe they were marrying within their kinship group. Thus **Mbamba** married his sister, **Ching'aning'ani**.

[01.07]

Chimphanza married his niece, **Mphukei**, the last born of his elder brother. **Ndomondo** said, 'I will marry my niece', the last born of **Ngapagwa**. His wife was **Saisi**. When it comes to marriage, the **Azimu** were not different from people that dwell in the realm below.

[01.08]

Tinjiwa, when he saw that his realm was growing, also his brothers and his children who were fully fledged, commanded this little gathering of all the **Azimu**.

[01.09]

When all had gathered in the great hall of meeting, he rose from his stool of *ulemu`*. Immediately, *chete*, all fell silent.

[01.10]

‘My lawfully wedded wife, my younger siblings and all my children, your gathering here has pleased me, your king. I want to tell you a secret that I was vouchsafed by my father, which I have kept safe like a pocket of seeds. You know her – this realm in which you are dwelling. Look down below. That realm which you see there – do you know her? What about the one below the one you can see - do you know her too?’

[01.11]

‘My father created three realms: the first is where we have our abode; the second he bestowed on the people below, the ones that you see; the third is at the very bottom and that is where I send dead people. We don’t die, but only those below. This realm is **Ntheradi**, the land of people that live below is **Sachokeka**, and the land of the dead is **Midima**. As you know, this my task is truly burdensome. I rule over all three of these realms, I provide everything that is necessary. Today, my young siblings and my children, you have grown up, and I wish to share this responsibility of mine.’

[01.12]

Chimphanza:

Elder, if I may interrupt, I mean no disrespect, you have done an excellent job.

Everyone:

Pwa! pwa! pwa! [They clap.]

Tinjiwa:

Thank you very much. Now let us see who is capable of ruling in **Sachokeka**, over all her lakes and her countries as well.

Mziisi:

Let Uncle **Ndomondo** give it a try.

Ngapagwa:

He cannot fail at this task, and I see further that he loves that realm, especially her lakes.

Everyone:

Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!

Tinjiwa:

What is your say on this, Elder?

Ndomondo:

I will build my royal house in the **Lake of Salt**, to the East of the realm of black people.

Everyone:

Pwa! pwa! pwa! [They clap.]

Tinjiwa:

What about the realm of the dead?

Ching'aning'ani:

Why not go to Younger Uncle since he tends to feel compassion, especially when a man in **Sachokeka** dies.

Mphukei:

But is it a good place, my husband?

Tinjiwa:

Have you agreed to this, my brother?

Chimphanza:

I wish it thus.

[01.13]

The king continued to declare that there was need for a chief messenger. They all agreed that it should be **Mapiko**, because he was swift. Next he chose the one responsible for bestowing skill and wisdom on the people of **Sachokeka**. They did not argue long over this. **Chezichezi** assumed this task. When they reached the heading of *nkhondo*, there was misunderstanding. When the king asked, the one who answered was **Mapiko**.

[01.14]

Mapiko:

This task is supposed to be given to a man, not a woman. Why not let **Mbamba** give it a try?

Ndomondo:

This task is indeed the work of a man, but, as you can see, as for all of us men here, our bodies are like those of grasshoppers. Let our sister **Mziisi** give it a try. Just look at the way she stands there.

Ngapagwa:

Yes, indeed, it is true, there is no bias, but **Mziisi** could have given it a try.

Mbamba:

Let us have no more argument here, father. Even though she is a woman, **Mziisi** can give it a try.

[01.15]

At this point all agreed. **Mziisi** was appointed to be commander of *nkhondo*. **Mbamba** was appointed to be responsible for weapons and the forge. After the gathering, **Ndomondo** and **Saisi**, his wife, set off on *ulendo* to **Sachokeka**. **Chimphanza** also departed for **Midima** with his wife.

[01.16]

Tinjiwa was delighted and commanded that the food of the **Azimu** should be brought. The **Azimu** eat honey and bread, and they drink honeyed mead, *basi*. **Mbamba** and **Ching'aning'ani** clashed their weapons together in the forge. The people from **Sachokeka** and **Midima** stood astonished and covered their mouths, not understanding what was happening at **Ntheradi**, as they heard the thunder.

Chapter 02

Zimeze, Paramount Chief of the Angitau

[02.01]

In **Sachokeka**, the second realm, there was calm. There were many tribes of men. The **Angitau** were the largest tribe. Their country was near the **Nile** River and was called **Ngitau**. Their paramount chief was **Zimeze**, a man with black hair, a young man, well built, short in stature, a merry man and handsome as becomes a chief.

[02.02]

Nachimasomaso, his wife, was a proper woman. She was short and fat, her hair was turning grey, her eyes shone, her face was smooth and shining, and, in short, everything about her was as it should be. Among all the women in **Sachokeka** she was the most comely.

[02.03]

One day, when **Zimeze** was conversing with his wife, his friend, his ministers and counsellors on the *khonde* of his house, a handsome chiefly house, they astonished to hear a mighty sound of wind. All of them stopped their talk and stared at one another. This mighty wind now whirled around the house.

[02.04]

Suddenly, they saw a shining cloud near **Zimeze**'s house. Everyone on that *khonde*, on seeing a young man – tall, a *mlendo*, good looking, descending from the cloud – turned pale with fear and fell to the ground.

[02.05]

'Arise, fear not.' A clear voice was heard. They all rose up and paid it their attention, *tcheru*. 'I am **Mapiko** the messenger. I am come from **Ntheradi**, where **Tinjiwa** has his abode, the king of kings, that I should declare and proclaim his news. He has decreed that, starting from yesterday, the three realms have been separately allocated. You already know these realms. The realm of heaven, **Ntheradi**: her king is **Tinjiwa**. This realm below, here at **Sachokeka**, is entrusted to **Ndomondo**, his elder. The realm in the very depths, at **Midima** – **Chimphanza** is the one who will be ruling her.'

[02.06]

'Further news is that if you desire wisdom, you should ask it of **Chezichezi**. If you desire weapons of *nkhondo*, you should ask them of **Mbamba**, and if it is appropriate, he will make them for you. **Mziisi** is the one who is knowledgeable in the whole strategy of *nkhondo*.'

[02.07]

After he had spoken thus, that same cloud covered him over. The paramount chief looked hard at his ministers and asked what they had understood from the message of heaven.

[02.08]

'What should we do?' the paramount chief asked. Of all men that were born of a woman, who had drunk a mother's milk, who are destined one day to die, there was no one so skilled in speaking and in resolving disputes: moreover, there was no one so knowledgeable in navigating the affairs of men, who could answer the difficult question of the paramount, than one man alone, **Bwampini**.

[02.09]

This man was one of the paramount chief's closest ministers. His home was at **Buwa**, in that very country of the **Angitau**, but independent. After hearing the question, three of these ministers thought of rebellion against the **Azimu**, because they wished to take from them their realm. Others said, 'Let us just stay and see what comes to pass'.

[02.10]

Bwampini alone objected and said to the paramount chief and all the elders, 'First of all, we are people, those in **Ntheradi** are **Azimu**. As for us, our wisdom is limited in comparison with theirs. We cannot rebel against them, because even as we speak they can hear us. The way in which they have divided the realms is good, for our benefit too is great. With their wisdom they will help us. We just need to summon everyone that they should understand. If we do that, we will please **Tinjiwa** for having sent us **Ndomondo**, to be our judge in matters that we do not understand according to our human wisdom.'

[02.11]

After hearing these wise words, the paramount chief, his wife, all his ministers and elders, clapped their hands and bowed down. His words were wise. The paramount

instructed his prime minister to summon his people that they should make preparation for a feast. After **Bwampini** had explained to the crowd of the assembled, as the paramount had requested, the people left, each to their hut. The next morning, people killed livestock: chickens, sheep, goats, cows and pigs. They cooked abundant food and prepared the drink that makes you stumble. When all the people had gathered, the priest in charge, **Chipempherere**, offered sacrifice to all the **Azimu** and offered another specially to welcome and acknowledge the protection of **Ndomondo**. After this, people ate, danced and drank with abandon!

Chapter 03

Chief of the Abuwa

[03.01]

People are similar in physical appearance, but in many respects the difference between them is great. There was in that country of the **Angitau** a tribe, full of wisdom, intelligence and skill, which was called the **Abuwa**. They lived to the South of the country of Paramount Chief **Zimeze**. Their own chief was **Bwampini**.

[03.02]

Bwampini was tall in stature, well built, with dark black hair; his face was round, his nose was long and its tip was like an eagle's beak. He was indeed a handsome man to look upon.

[03.03]

Reverend elders of the tribe of the **Abuwa** say that, when **Bwampini** was a young man, girls would follow him around, even the elderly women and those who had children would propose to him without cease. Most of all he surpassed all his fellow men in wisdom. Many people thought that he could almost have been the son of **Tinjiwa**. In speaking wise words or debating with his friends, in resolving conflict, in games of every kind, he had no rival.

[03.04]

Because of all this, **Zimeze** did not hesitate to chuse this man as his first counsellor and his minister. In the opinion of people and of **Azimu** dwelling in **Ntheradi** he was fortunate to have a wife who was his equal in almost every respect. Her name was **Namasinkho**. When a man is wise, it is often his misfortune to marry a useless woman, who constrains him, and as a wife, she often proves volatile: What lack of foresight!

[03.05]

This kind of bad luck was not for **Bwampini**. He steered a middle course. These two truly loved each other. They wore their love like a blanket! Peace between them was complete. None of their visitors could fail to acknowledge, with the appreciation of a house's finish (with unanimity), the freedom and the understanding these two had.

Chapter 04

Litsipa Goes to Feed the Animals

[04.01]

At **Ntheradi** there was the joyful sound of horns; also at **Sachokeka** there was total freedom. **Zimeze** and his people did not cease to thank **Ndomondo** since everything had gone well.

[04.02]

Even though there was this great joy, in another country, where there were people of a different tribe, a people skilled as well (but not so much), there was no real happiness. This tribe was surly when it came to happiness, seeking alway to open old wounds.

[04.03]

This tribe was called **Agangire**. Their paramount chief was **Gangire** himself. This paramount was old but full of wisdom. When a man grows old he tends to become careless in certain matters. His children were behaving as if they had already assumed the chieftainship.

[04.04]

Gangire had children: two sons, **Litsipa** and **Utwa**. The first born was the elder one, **Litsipa**. He was given the responsibility of herding the cattle and other animals. The younger one, **Utwa**, because he was the last born, remained in the village to gladden the old age of his father. Yet he possessed great strength.

[04.05]

One day **Litsipa** went to feed the animals and left his goats on a plentiful pasture. He sought shade elsewhere and sat down. While he was minding his own business and thinking his own thoughts, something surprised him. There were no clouds in the sky, but suddenly three shining white clouds appeared, to the North, flying at speed. Soon he saw them close to. He saw that they were people, three of them, standing beside him: people with clothes that shone like the sun, their faces like infants, beautiful beyond compare.

[04.06]

He greeted them with *ulemu*, then he remained hushed and looked at them closely, with no fear. He understood that they were **Azimu**. In short order **Ching'aning'ani**, wife to **Mbamba**, spoke.

[04.07]

Ching'aning'ani:

Are you surprised? We are here to visit you, because we like you and we have come with a gift. Chuse who among us is the most beautiful. That is the one who will give you a gift.

Mziisi:

However, on this you must think carefully. For if you name me, I will give you strength surpassing anyone that drinks water.

Chezichezi:

And I will give you the skill for playing *mngoli*, for carving and for painting. The master of all creative arts will be you.

Ching'aning'ani:

If you name me, you will marry a woman who is the most beautiful among all the girls of the children of men.

[04.08]

At this the boy was troubled by thoughts. This was not a dream but reality. He had strength but not too much; he had already failed to defeat his agemates, and today he had a chance to find additional strength for a fight! Now too even the reverend elders would not strike him with fear. On the other hand, he admired singing and the creative arts. As son to a chief, he could now have made even leopard to dance to his beautiful songs. He could even have made stools, tables and beds for his father. **Litsipa**'s good reputation would have been heard everywhere.

[04.09]

But the thought of the most beautiful girl among all women and girls here below pleased him very much. He did not waste time in chusing and bowed before **Ching'aning'ani**. He proclaimed her the chief of all beautiful people. At once the other **Azimu** took their leave. **Ching'aning'ani** alone remained and explained in detail about the beautiful girl.

Her name was **Namadanitsa**. She dwelt in the country of the **Angitau** with **Ndaziona**, a younger brother to **Zimeze**.

Chapter 05

War

[05.01]

Everything works out just as it has been ordained. Everything that begins has an end. When a man is born, he has no choice but to do what has been written for him, whether good luck or ill; he must meet with them all, whether he wish them or no, alike. When **Namadanitsa** was at the water's edge to wash clothes with her *anamwali*, she saw something moving across the waters, coming toward them. Upon closer inspection she saw that it was a boat, a large one. When she looked even closer, she saw that aboard there were young men and reverend elders.

[05.02]

When the boat had moored alongshore, the commander disembarked with his regalia for *nkhondo* and asked if the girls knew where a certain chief was residing, **Ndaziona**, younger brother to **Zimeze**, paramount chief of the **Angitau**. Thereupon, **Namadanitsa** rose to her feet and began to greet the *mlendo* and all his companions. She explained that, actually, **Ndaziona** resided upstream along the **Nile**, close to the **Lake**; **Zimeze**, his elder brother, resided downstream. **Namadanitsa** continued to explain, 'Where you are standing now is very close to the Chief's house, but you cannot see it because it is hidden by these trees. If you wish to see the Chief, I, his wife, **Namadanitsa**, will escort you, according to your pleasure.'

[05.03]

On hearing the name of **Namadanitsa**, **Litsipa** jumped for joy, and smiled slightly, saying, 'Since I have seen that the place is accessible by boat, please, come aboard with your servants, so that we might make haste, because we wish to travel quickly.' Immediately, he whispered to the boat's captain that they should not go to that place.

[05.04]

Unknown to all, one girl did not board the boat. Rather, she hid herself. On seeing that the boat was hastening her *ulendo* home across the waters, that girl shouted and cried aloud, like a horn. People came to see what had happened, but they found that **Litsipa** had already gone; he had almost reached home. The **Agangire** had no compare in steering boats.

[05.05]

'Our lady, **Namadanitsa**, has been abducted by the **Agangire**!' she announced to everyone.

[05.06]

When **Ndaziona** had heard this news, it tore out his soul. He could neither cry nor speak. When he had recovered his wisdom, he gathered his people and explained to them that in all Creation, he, **Ndaziona**, was without friends. This was the second occasion to find himself in a similar dispute, for the previous week his first born had been found consumed by lion. What was happening?

[05.07]

Ndaziona sent five men on horseback to break the news to his elder brother, **Zimeze**, explaining that **Gangire** had declared *nkhondo* against them, the **Angitau**, by abducting his wife, **Namadanitsa**. He himself told his boatwrights to ready boats; he also told his counsellor of *nkhondo* to muster young men for bloody deeds and to issue weapons of *nkhondo*. His elder brother, on hearing the news, did the same. Without delay he arrived with his boats of *nkhondo*.

[05.08]

Elder **Gangire**, when he heard what his son had done to **Zimeze**, in abducting his sister-in-law, knew that *nkhondo* was coming, and he told **Kazione**, his commander-in-chief, to be prepared, because there could be no foolishness.

[05.09]

The day before *nkhondo* broke out, those who had eyes to see observed in the heaven birds, great ones, fighting and plucking out each other's feathers. **Mbamba** sounded his horns and beat his drums, *gulugulu*. **Sachokeka** was filled with thunders and lightnings. In the country of the **Agangire** there was a *bwalo*, laid out well and huge, where games of all kinds were conducted. Long time ago their ancestors had met in *nkhondo*; they arrived and filled it.

[05.10]

In **Ntheradi**, **Tinjiwa** and his people were divided: some wished to assist the **Angitau**, others the **Agangire**. The hearts of all pounded incessantly, anxiety gripped everyone.

[05.11]

Bwampini, the commander-in-chief of all the **Angitau**, is on horseback; he led all the *ankhondo* of the **Angitau**. **Kazione** was his opposite number for the **Agangire**.

[05.12]

Death, wounds, cries, famine, anxiety filled the whole realm of **Sachokeka**. The sound of spears, knobkerries, bows and arrows made people's ears to be deaf. **Pherera**, second-in-command of the **Angitau**, killed many **Agangire**. He just killed them just as disease does chickens. By birthright, nor knives nor spears nor arrows could pierce his skin. Because of this he just charged straight amidst the foe, who cast knives, spears, arrows, but he was untouched. **Kazione**, who was son to **Ching'aning'ani**, for that his

father, **Chokhola**, slept with this **Mzimu** one day, even though she was wife to another, killed many **Angitau**.

[05.13]

Utwa, the younger son of **Gangire**, himself fought to instil terror. A tall man, well built, skilled in dodging and thrusting, he performed a man's deeds.

[05.14]

The bodies of dead men from both sides could not be buried. Hyena and all the beasts that crave flesh made a great feast, dread birds like vultures found only fertiliser. **Zimeze** was deeply troubled on seeing the son of his sister **Saopa** after he had been stabbed in the stomach by **Kazione**'s spear. He let fly arrows to pierce his enemy but the arrows were just churning up the dust; others pierced some of the **Agangire**. **Saopa** died unmarried. (They are still on the *bwalo*.)

[05.15]

Pherera was furious and charged amidst the **Agangire**. On seeing his throws, which did not miss and could not be avoided, the *ankhondo* scattered. On seeing this, **Utwa** volunteered, wanting to fight alone with spears, him against **Pherera**. This could have been a dangerous moment! **Pherera**, who did not fear any kind of weapon, ran against his opponent and threw his spear. At once, darkness fell, for the spear had struck the shield of **Ching'aning'ani**, who wanted to save **Utwa**. Because of **Pherera'**s strength, the spear entered **Ching'aning'ani**'s bowels and passed through. Even though **Utwa** fell before the blow, he was not pierced because of **Ching'aning'ani**. Horns sounded, because it was dusk. All the *ankhondo* went their way to their camps. At the time of night, they found time to bury the dead and to give sacrifice for the dead. At dawn, hearts were darkened with anxiety, *nkhawa bi*.

[05.16]

The *ankhondo* met again, '*Kho*! *Kho*! *Thwe*! *Thwe*! *Mayo*!' The noise was to be heard everywhere. **Bwampini**, with his surpassing wisdom, shewed his greatness in the art of *nkhondo*. After he had planned with **Pherera**, there went on to the *bwalo* of *nkhondo* only a few **Angitau**. At once **Utwa** and **Ndaziona** were deceived, thinking that the **Angitau** would surrender on that very day, not another.

[05.17]

But they did not know **Bwampini**. He made a great horse, carved of wood, huge in size. Many *ankhondo* entered within; the *ulendo* was led by **Zimeze**, **Ndaziona**, **Chamuna** and other distinguished *ankhondo*. At midnight, other *ankhondo* hauled that great horse until it was close to the gates of the great city of **Gangire** – **Huwa**. When the **Agangire** arose, they found the great horse, beautiful, carved of wood, and they wondered greatly at it. Women, children, the elderly and all the men who were sick and had not departed for *nkhondo*, looked at it closely and they were curious. They pushed it and brought it within their city. They thought that maybe it were a gift of propitiation from the **Angitau**.

[05.18]

Namadanitsa too arrived and she looked at the great horse closely. After she had observed it, she told the **Agangire** that inside it there were men, but they disagreed with her and laughed at her. She tried all manner of words to make those within the horse to laugh, but she failed. The **Agangire**, when they had grown tired of staring at this object, which had come as if on *ulendo*, departed and went to their huts.

[05.19]

At night, when everyone had departed to sleep, **Bwampini** told his *ankhondo* to climb out. They all clomb out and they fought a silent *nkhondo* until they had opened the gates of the city. Other *ankhondo* of the **Angitau** entered and burned **Huwa**, and they captured Paramount Chief **Gangire**; they killed every man in the city, even the elderly, but the girls and the young mothers of children were seized instead. **Utwa** and **Kazione** were surprised by **Bwampini**'s deceit, they surrendered, and *nkhondo* ended at once. These two were not killed.

[05.20]

Zimeze, now that he had seized the wealth of **Huwa** and also her girls, ordered his *ankhondo* to assemble. They made a feast of their victory over **Gangire**, and they gave a sacrifice of thanksgiving to the **Azimu**, more especially to **Mziisi** [**Ndomondo**], who assisted them greatly to mourn the dead. At length, he ordered *ulendo* back home. Only a few got back home. Out of fifty boats that had come only thirty returned, full of living men, the wealth of **Huwa** and the girls of the **Agangire**.

Chapter 06

Bwampini Returns Home through the Country of the Asongo

[06.01]

Maybe it was bad luck, but **Bwampini** had said farewell to Paramount Chief **Zimeze**, informing him that he would take another route back home. He had brought with him five boats, in each of which there were ten men. Instead of travelling across the **Lake** he preferred to take a long way round, travelling along its length. Food was plentiful. Water was also plentiful. They had wine too, both sweet and dry. They lacked for nothing. All kinds of games were available. Every man aboard was happy. They talked about **Gangire**, the praiseworthy wisdom of **Bwampini**. And sadness came over them as they fell to talking about their homes, their children and their wives, and all their relatives. They had a lot to talk about. As they were paddling the boat, they saw, somewhere on the shore, well-planted trees, orange trees, and indeed, the fruit was ripe to eat. At once the captains suggested to **Bwampini** that they should explore the place and, if possible, ask for some of that fruit.

[06.02]

Bwampini did not refuse. He moored the boat alongshore and disembarked. On closer inspection he saw that the country appeared to lack an owner. The greedy fellows hurried toward the trees to pick the fruits. Some remained in the boat, others were on their way to the fruits.

[06.03]

Before long, they heard cries here and there, and then, on looking closely, they saw snakes, great big ones, just waiting motionless in the tops of the trees, listening and watching closely. Some snakes were chasing people, others were striking at them. ‘Look!’ cried all those who had remained on the boat. Thereupon was great haste: some of the snakes are biting, others are being killed. Almost five people were bitten, and one of those bitten was **Chimadyo**, a great eater [wamadyo].

[06.04]

Bwampini alone shewed courage. When a snake was chasing him, he stood his ground and crushed its head. *Nkhondo* ensued. Other snakes rushed against him, with their tongues aflicker. By his great skill all those snakes that came against him were cut down. Those who were watching from afar saw **Bwampini**’s hands spinning around like the rim of a wheel, killing beasts. He killed ten of them! When the snakes saw that their fellow snakes were being laid low, *lambalamba*, they retreated to their hideaways in the trees. In all haste **Bwampini** ran back to the boat, exhausted. *Ulendo* continued.

Chapter 07

Baboon People

[07.01]

Trembling with sorrow, the captains continued their *ulendo*, thinking of the snakes that they had seen, and for food they had no appetite. And as they thought of their companions who had died because of the bites of those baleful snakes, their sorrow grew and grew.

[07.02]

Bwampini too could not be truly happy as he thought of what had passed. But he considered that anger profits not a man and it is better to indulge sorrow, albeit not for

ever. He took his *mngoli* and began to sing bitter-sweet songs to make them forget sorrow. He ordered wine and fine food. The captains ate and danced. All sorrow fled away.

[07.03]

Ulendo proceeds; they saw somewhere a burning fire. **Bwampini** was curious and thought of exploring the area. On the other hand, they wanted to fetch water, fresh water, for the water they were drinking had been stored for a long time, for a whole year.

[07.04]

The boats were hauled ashore. They all disembarked because they wished to walk a little on land. Some wished to sit down and to take their ease, others wished to explore the country. **Bwampini** searched for a well to draw water. He found it as he was walking with two captains. Beside the well there was a tall tree. When one of the captains looked up to heaven, he saw a big fellow, with fur over its whole body. He exclaimed, '*Hi*! What is that?' Whatever it was grabbed him, like a mango. He cried, '*Mayo*!' The beast broke his neck and strangled him. When **Bwampini** went to look, he only heard the other captain, '*Mayo*!' It had already broken his neck too, *waka*! Now there was *nkhondo*.

[07.05]

That beast, when it attempted to grab **Bwampini**, just felt a blow on its hands, *ngwanju*! It too cried aloud in its own language. It barked and sharpened its teeth. It clomb down to throttle him. **Bwampini** crushed its head. Thereupon, the beast cried, '*Mayo*!' It dropped dead, *khu*! At this time the other captains, who were walking elsewhere, also met with the pack of baboon.

[07.06]

These baboon were like people but they had the teeth of a beast. There was a great chatter of **Baboon People** as they fought with real people. It was a great *nkhondo*. The baboon broke off branches. They also had stones and sticks, they threw them all, hoping not to miss. But people are just people: **Bwampini**, on his own, with his spear and his arrows, killed fifty baboon. Some of the captains killed their own baboon. The baboon perished, almost all died, although some made their escape. *Nkhondo* ended and the men hurried back to the boats; at once paddles were struck.

Chapter 08

Chikutumbwe

[08.01]

Too much thinking had been killing **Bwampini**. He thought of the city of **Huwa**. He recalled also his friend, **Pherera**, Paramount Chief **Zimeze**, *nkhondo* between the **Angitau** and the **Agangire**. His heart was troubled.

[08.02]

The captains too were heart broken, when they thought of their friends who had been killed by the **Baboon People**. Understanding that beautiful song was the means to sweep away their sorrow and all their other evil and dangerous thoughts, they called for a master of song. He sang about the sadness of the **Azimu**, of the marriage of **Bwampini** and **Namasinkho**, of *nkhondo* between the **Angitau** and the **Agangire**, and he finished with the song of the marriage of **Tinjiwa** and **Ngapagwa**. The songs were exceeding sweet. All their hearts were cheered and soothed. Especially **Bwampini**'s, when he heard the song of his marriage to **Namasinkho**.

[08.03]

As their *ulendo* was underway, the sound of goats and of sheep was heard from a certain small island. '*Me-me-me-me-be-be-be!*' Such a sound reminded them of the flesh of goats and of sheep. A craving for meat seized all of them. It was a long time since they had tasted of cooked and roasted flesh.

[08.04]

Bwampini could not resist the desire to take a look. But this time he was clever. He selected twelve people. He told others to stay behind, for there was perchance great danger in the place for which they were bound, so it was good that some should survive.

[08.05]

They obeyed. After they had pulled their boat ashore, the men who had been chosen set off on their *ulendo*. They wandered about without seeing anything, but after walking a little further, they found a cave. When they looked within, they saw firewood, fire, and flesh aplenty, of sheep and of goats.

[08.06]

Bwampini called '*Odi*', but he heard not a single word in reply. So they just entered. Because hunger gripped them, each man cut his portion of flesh, that he might roast it, as if it were in short supply. After they ate, they drank the wine which they had brought with. As they were taking their ease, they heard the sound of sheep and of goats which were drawing closer. '*Me-me-me; bere-re!*' The animals all entered, *lowulowu*, but their herd was not to be seen. They were indeed goats and sheep, but their size was that of cattle. Soon they heard a cough and their owner appeared. This owner of theirs did not look around, *ayi*. He simply dropped his bundle of firewood, then he closed the entrance with a great rock.

[08.07]

Bwampini looked at it, they all looked at it. But *ee*! *Amuna*! They all trembled with fear. There are its great legs, its eye (just one) set on its forehead, and it is enormously tall! This fellow was **Chikutumbwe**.

[08.08]

As it turned and looked closely it saw little people huddled together. It smiled and asked, ‘Who are you?’

‘We are **Angitau**.’ **Bwampini** answered. Cleverly.

‘Who is it that is speaking?’

‘My name is Just Crying.’

[08.09]

Instantly the beast snatched two men by the legs and struck their heads together.

[08.10]

Next it cast them into its mouth, one by one, and swallowed them, *gwidyo*! *gwidyo*!

[08.11]

At that the captains trembled with fear. Their enemy took three full pails of milk and poured them down (drank them). After that, it slept. At dawn it snatched another two men and struck their heads, against the rock, then it chewed them up. Next, it poured down another two full pails of boiled milk.

[08.12]

After it left, **Bwampini** clapped his hands and shook his head. He saw a great wooden stake and he sharpened it very well at the tip. He told his companions to remain vigilant that night, *tcheru*. At dusk there was heard again, ‘*Me-me-me; berere… berere re re*’. The

beast appeared. It closed the entrance behind it. It snatched two people and sucked them like sweets. It did not chew them.

[08.13]

Bwampini approached and asked, saying, 'Have you ever tasted sweet wine?' 'Just hurry up with it, *iwe*', the beast replied. When it had tasted this wine, **Chikutumbwe** returned and asked for more. Then, *dzandidzandi*, it stumbled, drunkenly. '*Iwe*, I will eat you last, since you are *waulemu* and obedient.' Without delay, **Bwampini** took the sharpened stake and placed it in the fire until it glowed red. He told his companions to help him to pierce the eye of **Chikutumbwe**.

[08.14]

They did not delay. They took that great stake and drove it with all their strength into the eye of the beast, until, *thudzu*, it burst! The beast screamed and groaned. All his friends came up.

'Why are you crying?' his friends asked.

'Just Crying is killing me here.'

'Are you just crying?' his friends asked. 'Since you are just crying, so... carry on crying!'

[08.15]

At dawn **Bwampini** and his companions tied themselves under the bellies of the sheep. As they were going out, **Chikutumbwe** tried to search for them but found nothing. A blind man! Outside, the men untied themselves and fled. They continued their *ulendo* and then, in the middle of the **Lake**, **Bwampini** shouted, '*Iwe*, stay safe there!' In response, **Chikutumbwe** picked up a stone, a great boulder, and cast it with all its

strength and a burning heart, considering how it had been deceived. They almost died, to a man. The stone fell near their boat, and that boat of theirs almost turned over.

'If you meet my father on the waters, he will not let you be.' **Chikutumbwe** shouted after them.

[08.16]

Their *ulendo* was underway, but it was a sorrowful one.

Chapter 09

A Baleful Crab

[09.01]

Everyone's eyes poured tears and turned red, their faces were downcast, and food did not touch their lips, as they recalled yet more dead friends. To be devoured by a wild animal was understandable, but by a fellow man!

[09.02]

Bwampini knew that their *ulendo* was full of extraordinary bad luck. Almost twenty men were already dead, some killed by baboon, others by snake, but the last ones were eaten by a man. A man with his wisdom and a hopeful heart... What sort of problems might he face?

[09.03]

Bwampini, forcing himself, tried to look cheerful, and asked his men to dance. He tried to cheer people with his melodious songs, excellent to hear. Upon hearing the sweetness of those songs, their tears dried, and they all began to cheer up. As they

continued, joy and songs in their midst, one of them, looking around, thought that he saw enormous waves up ahead, but the waters were otherwise calm. When **Bwampini** also looked, he saw that the waters were whipped up heavenward, and it made little clouds in the heaven.

[09.04]

Anxiety seized him. He told everyone to remain in their respective places and to hold on tight to their weapons, because up ahead there was something that wanted to make them afraid. They all understood. Now only two boats remained. However, they were all in one boat, because there were only a few people left, and the other boat was being towed, for it carried supplies. When they drew closer, they saw that the waters were circling faster (it was a whirlpool) and their boat was leaning to one side. They did not see anything unusual, only that the waters were cast up heavenward. When they entered into the water's midst, they saw something with twelve legs standing atop the water.

[09.05]

Their hearts were troubled, *myuu*! Fear held them tight. The steersman acted as if he saw nothing, but kept on, passing it by, *lambalala*; when they were about to pass – what sorrow! – all their hair stood on end.

[09.06]

Without delay, it grabbed five men and drowned them. It did not appear again. The boat moved at speed now. There was a great cry; screaming… death. They were all scared, and **Bwampini** himself was trembling. It was very doubtful that those who survived would make it back to their village. Five men are gone at the same time, they saw it with their own eyes.

[09.07]

Bwampini comforted himself and comforted his companions by reminding them of their home, of *nkhondo* between the **Angitau** and the **Agangire**. **Muvina** took his *mngoli* and sang exceedingly delightful songs to complement what **Bwampini** had said.

[09.08]

The hearts of all were calmed and they wiped away their tears. A wine, with fine aroma and sweet, was fetched forth, likewise food that was well cooked with oil.

[09.09]

There was song and dance, and drinking, the whole day long, making as if to bury everything that had passed. As they continued the journey with good cheer, they saw a beautiful shore, with sand, a country that bestows happiness. They all wished to step onto the land and to run for a little. Just to sit down, to rest their legs. **Bwampini** also wished to explore this country. A wise man does not neglect the opportunity to make sure to learn something new.

Chapter 10

Namatsenga in Trouble

[10.01]

Once they had reached the shore, they found much of interest; grasses and other fine and handsome plants. Great birds and small, little creatures that walk and creep.

[10.02]

Bwampini told his companions to wait for him while he went to a certain small mountain with his arrows, and when he had reached the mountain, he saw smoke rising up somewhere, only that no house could be seen. He was very eager to discover the identity of the owner of that beautiful country. When he had looked and indeed looked

more closely, he wished to return to his companions. When he was about to leave, he saw an antelope passing by, and he crouched down. He crept up on it, then he shot a single arrow. It fell to that single shot. The arrow passed through and landed somewhere else. He hurried and took up the antelope. When he reached his companions, he skinned it. There was a feast. Some of the flesh was roasted, some boiled. **Muvina** fetched forth wine, both fragrant and delicious, and they quaffed it down.

[10.03]

After they had eaten, **Bwampini** explained to his companions what he had seen. He had seen smoke. It was necessary for them to know who was there. After they had argued among themselves, they decided to divide into two groups; one of fifteen people, the other the same. They cast lots to determine which group would go. The lot fell to **Muvina** and his group; now they wasted no time but commenced their *ulendo* and set off. Those on *ulendo* took a long time to reach their destination, since the way they were going was far indeed. After walking a little, they saw a house, handsome and large, with a chimney (to release the smoke). On looking more closely at the exterior [the *bwalo*], they discovered fine couch grass and many beautiful flowers.

[10.04]

While they stood in wonder, they were shocked to see lion, leopard, hyena and pig. They wanted to run away, but **Muvina** braced the hearts of his companions. The strange thing was that those animals did not shew rage toward them but they drew near, fawning. They wagged their tails, some licked them. The companions astonished at their fawning behaviour. In the midst of their amaze they heard very beautiful songs within the house, and at once their hearts started to pound, *pha-pha-pha*. They understood now that the owner was occupied with other things about the house. Hunger drove them, and, being curious as to the beautiful songs that were heard within, they were eager to enter the house of that person unknown.

[10.05]

Muvina gave the order that they should enter, but he remained behind, intentionally. Once they had all entered, he hid behind a great pillar. Those curious fellows, once they

had knocked, saw at once (immediately) that the door was opened; the face of a woman appeared. This woman was in her youth, sparkling like a star, very beautiful. She shewed them to the dining table. As they were there, the maidservants brought food; two girls, nicely turned out. As they were eating, they were given wine in small vessels of tortoise. As they were about to drink, they saw the woman carrying her wand. She tapped each one of them on the head and they all turned straightaway into pigs. The one who had remained hidden, upon listening, heard pigs grunting within. When he listened closely, he heard pigs grunting in complaint.

[10.06]

This man… tears fell and washed his whole face. With all haste he ran back, crying, to his companions who had remained with **Bwampini**. On seeing him, his eyes swelled up with tears; his companions also began to cry, after hearing everything.

[10.07]

'What has happened?' **Bwampini** asked.

'*Pepani*, it is sad! (*he cried*). Our companions are no longer people, but they have been turned into pigs.' They all wept.

'Whom did you find?' some of his companions asked.

'A woman, a dangerous one.'

[10.08]

After he had heard everything, **Bwampini**'s heart burned with rage and sorrow, and he told his companions to wait for him until he returned. He was filled with many different thoughts as he started his *ulendo*. His wisdom failed him, even though he surpassed all his companions in wisdom, but this kind of sorcerer… it was clear that she was one of

the **Azimu**, but evil. What will he do now when he finally meets a woman of this ilk? While he was torturing himself with such thoughts, he saw of a sudden a very good looking young man standing ahead of him.

[10.09]

'Is everything OK, elder? What is your *ulendo*?' that young man asked.

'I am troubled, my friend, for a certain woman, evil at heart, has turned my people into pigs. What should I do now?'

[10.10]

That young man explained to him that the one who did this was **Mabuta** and that his [her] female name [maiden name] was **Namatsenga**. A woman deeply versed in evil arts. He shewed him a certain bush and told him that, if he should be offered drink or food of any sort, he must chew the shoot of that bush with.

[10.11]

Bwampini received it with gratitude and went on his way briskly. When he arrived, he knocked on the door of the house, *gogoda*, and it was opened for him. He saw a woman with untrustworthy and deceiving eyes. She greeted him, *moni*, and invited him to a stool at the table. Thereupon, he was offered food that was delivered by those same girls. Wine was also offered. He remembered the words of **Mapiko**, that handsome young man, and he began to chew that woody root. The woman started up and tapped him on the head. *Ngwindiri*! He did not change into a beast.

[10.12]

'Are you really a native son of **Sachokeka**?'

‘I am. Why do you ask?’ After answering thus, **Bwampini** drew his sword from its sheath, intending to cut off the *mfiti*’s head.

‘*Chonde*, Please don’t kill me! *Chonde*, Please don’t kill me!’ **Namatsenga** cried. Only then did she recall the words of a certain prophet who had warned her of a certain *mlendo* called **Bwampini**. ‘Are you **Bwampini**, by any chance?’

‘I am, what of it? I will kill you today, if you do not hand over my people. Hurry up and change them back into people.’

‘Worry not, they will be back now’, that woman said. On hearing his threat, **Namatsenga** had become afraid and she changed the pigs back into people.

[10.13]

Without delay, **Bwampini** saw his people, that they were coming. He rushed to them and welcomed them, *moni*, clapping his hands. He wished to bid farewell to **Namatsenga**, but **Namatsenga** insisted that he should sit down and talk for a while.

[10.14]

‘Do you wish that we should all change into pigs?’ **Bwampini** objected.

[10.15]

But **Namatsenga** lowered her gaze in sorrow and shame, and she apologised, *pepa*, for her disrespect. She asked **Bwampini** to forgive her, saying that everything was in the past, and that they should forget by making a feast. They all agreed.

[10.16]

Namatsenga sent a messenger to call those who had remained behind. When they had all arrived, the new and the old together, **Namatsenga** bade them to bathe in warm water. When they had bathed, she shewed them a room where they anointed themselves with sweet-smelling ointments, dressed their hair well, and clothed themselves in linen that was fresh and ironed. Water and clothes make a person to resplend. On presenting himself, **Bwampini** had changed into a truly handsome man. The others also appeared with youthful faces and handsome. **Namatsenga** herself was outstanding. Her servants likewise.

[10.17]

The feast was in full swing. Well baked loaves, flesh of every sort, fruits, wine that stood alone for its fragrance. Songs are in their midst, for **Namatsenga** had many masters of song, people ate and drank, so as to make them forget everything. **Muvina** took up his *mngoli* and sang of the *ulendo* of the **Angitau** to **Gangire** and of their *nkhondo*. Thereupon, the young men cried on hearing of their sufferings, even though there was joy, for the master had sung also of the day on which **Zimeze** had assumed the paramountcy.

[10.18]

Namatsenga amazed at such mastery of song and she bestowed on the master a robe of gold.

[10.19]

When all had eaten and made merry, **Bwampini** rose and thanked their generous host; he informed her that the time had come for them to continue their *ulendo*. **Mabuta** agreed, with sorrow. She told her servants to bring food and drink for the *alendo* to take with. She gave them besides, to each one of them, many clothes. They set off on their *ulendo* to the shore. On arrival, they pushed their boat into the water, and they resumed their *ulendo*.

Chapter 11

A Terrible Storm

[11.01]

The hearts of all were at peace, even though some of them had experienced what it is like to be a pig, but these thoughts were supplanted by the gifts and the freedom that they had received from **Namatsenga**. They were all aglow in those truly admirable clothes, and they did not think of anything but dancing, eating, drinking and story-telling, *basi*.

[11.02]

As their *ulendo* continued, there were heard sounds of flutes, horns and drums; there were heard too songs that made even **Muvina** to amaze. **Bwampini** heard them too. On reflection, he remembered what he had heard once from a certain friend in conversation. That friend had said, 'To the North of the country of **Ngitau** there is a tribe of very large people, their legs like those of birds, with their claws, but feeding on others. They deceive others by calling with beautiful songs.' He remembered that many people had been killed because they were not clever enough.

[11.03]

There was really no remedy but to stop their ears with wax. Before those songs had ended, **Bwampini** advised them, his companions, of this and he asked them all to stop their ears with wax. As for himself, **Bwampini**, he asked them not to stop his own ears with wax but to lash him fast to the boat.

[11.04]

It was done. As they continued together, they drew near to those beautiful songs. Because their ears were closed with wax, the captains were like the deaf; even though the sweet songs grew louder and became even more attractive, they paid no attention and just paddled the boat faster. The air was filled with those beautiful songs. **Bwampini** wished to untie himself so that he might see with his own eyes and witness the beauty that was being sung; moreover, who were these people singing these songs?

[11.05]

‘Please, *Chonde*, untie me!’ **Bwampini** begged, but there was no one who would untie him. By good luck they held fast. At length, they untied **Bwampini** and praised him for his wisdom.

[11.06]

Their *ulendo* was almost at its end. **Muvina** took his *mngoli* and recalled to them the great feast at **Namatsenga**’s house. He sang also a song recalling the birth of Paramount Chief **Zimeze**, when the people delighted. All their faces sparkled with joy.

[11.07]

While this was happening, they saw **Ndomondo**, father of **Chikutumbwe**, and at once he sent forth a terrible wind, which whipped up enormous waves. There broke a great storm. The waters swelled terribly. The two boats were tossed about and the people aboard were thrown here and there. Their hearts skipped a beat, *myuu*!, at the same time.

[11.08]

‘Hold on tight!’ **Bwampini** shouted, warning his companions. All knew that the **Azimu** were angry at them, especially **Ndomondo**. **Chikutumbwe** had spoken the truth, but what else could they have done? Both boats were hurled into the heaven, then they crashed down; both were completely shattered.

[11.09]

They all drowned and some were torn apart, *balala*, their body parts scattered. They all died except for **Bwampini** alone, who held on fast to a plank that was floating there. His

face was swollen and indeed, his whole body was broken. He could not do anything, his wisdom failed him. He simply drifted in whichever direction the plank floated.

Chapter 12

Gingiswa

[12.01]

On a certain shore there lived a certain woman, whom **Tinjiwa** had banished from his kingdom in **Ntheradi**. Her name was **Gingiswa**. She lived alone in a cave, but it was a terribly beautiful cave. All around lay her little flowers, little drawings, which she had made herself, and many utensils. Most of the time she loved to sew, and when she was weary, she played her *mkangala*, a beautiful instrument, crafted with skill. One day, when everything had wearied her, she went to the shore just to take fresh air. When she had reached there, she stood fast in amaze.

[12.02]

She saw a handsome man, asleep. She could not understand how he had got there. On closer inspection she saw that his face was swollen, his body was lacerated all over, his clothes were ragged and filled with rubbish and seaweed. She shook him but he did not wake up, but he was certainly not dead, because he was still breathing.

[12.03]

And because **Bwampini** had become very thin on account of all the troubles he had faced, he was very light, so that **Gingiswa** had no trouble in carrying him. After reaching her house, she laid him down in a good place and covered him with a *chitenje* and a blanket. After he had warmed up a little, he looked around a little, although his eyes were blear, and he realised that he was in someone's house. When **Gingiswa** saw this, she helped him up and invited him to take a bath. When he had bathed and applied fragrant lotion, **Gingiswa** gave him radiant garments to put on. He put them on and was transformed, even though he was still weak.

[12.04]

Gingiswa admired him very much and she thought in her heart that she had found an opportunity for marriage, but these things she kept in her heart. When she had prepared fragrant food and drink to accompany, **Gingiswa**, with all her skill, asked **Bwampini** to come closer. They exchanged stories of every kind. Indeed, *ayi*, they talked, ate and drank also. The woman who had made him welcome, *moni*, asked him where he had come from.

[12.05]

Bwampini explained detail by detail. His home was the country of the **Angitau**, where he had come from, and with Paramount Chief **Zimeze** he had fought *nkhondo* at **Gangire**. From there he had left with his men, in their numbers, to return home, but he had gone a separate way from all his companions. He emphasized that he had faced bad luck of every sort, and all his companions too had met only bad luck: some were killed by snake, others by **Baboon People**, others yet by **Chikutumbwe**. Many of those who had been with him were lost in the **Lake**. Now he remained alone, without a companion, not even one, and he had lost hope of seeing home again.

[12.06]

Gingiswa listened with great curiosity: the story was beautiful but full of sorrow. She consoled **Bwampini**, *pepa*, and she assured him that he would have good luck and return home. Since it was late at night, both now went to sleep, each in his own bed.

[12.07]

At dawn **Gingiswa** arose early and she prepared water and cooked breakfast, just as do young girls and married women, hastening about in their families. **Bwampini**, when he had risen, went to bathe in the bathroom, and he returned a new person. **Gingiswa** called him to table and they began to eat.

[12.08]

At this time **Bwampini** took no delight in eating. He remembered all the evil that he had seen, and he emphasized that to die at such a bitter time would be no bad thing. Immediately, **Gingiswa** realised that her companion was sunk in deep sorrow. If **Bwampini** were just an ordinary man, this sorrow could have killed him, but as for a wise man... Death, insult, bad luck, none of these, make him to lose hope. Now **Bwampini** felt the pain, *ululu*, in his heart, which we cannot explain.

[12.09]

That woman tried to take her *mkangala* and she played music to make one delight in life, but she could not please **Bwampini**. She tried to sing for him with her beautiful voice, surpassing the *mkangala* that she was playing, but she failed. **Bwampini** told her that he wished to sleep, and he went and slept, because he felt pain in his body. Time passed and **Bwampini** recovered his strength, and his wounds and his physical pain of every sort ceased, but sorrow ate his heart, and gnawed him over again, day by day. **Gingiswa** failed to find a way to please him.

[12.10]

Often **Bwampini** liked to go to the shore of the **Lake** and to think of home. He liked to think of all the **Angitau**, of **Zimeze**, of the great *nkhondo* at **Huwa**. When he thought of what had befallen his companions on their *ulendo*, he would cry alway. The greatest sorrow seized him when he thought of his wife, **Namasinkho**. This was after twenty years had passed. He had left his wife when she was still a *namwali* without child. Would he not find her already married to some other devil?

[12.11]

A long time ago, when his wife was still a young girl, she displayed attractive behaviour; as she reached *chinamwali*, and came of marriageable age, her behaviour grew ever

more attractive. But perhaps because women sometime cannot be trusted… You can't know what is happening behind your back.

[12.12]

While **Bwampini** was thinking about this, **Gingiswa** came with sympathy to keep him company. Conversation flowed. She urged **Bwampini** to dream no more of his home. For he had already found a woman and should just marry her, *basi*. 'Do you not want to marry a girl from the Realm of the **Azimu**?' she asked. Truth be told, **Gingiswa** was very beautiful; even **Namadanitsa** could not compare with her. Indeed, in the whole of **Sachokeka** there was no woman to surpass her in beauty. Even **Namasinkho**'s beauty could have gone into **Gingiswa**'s one hundredfold, even more than that.

[12.13]

Bwampini replied to **Gingiswa**. 'Listen. Even if you are beautiful and even if you could tell me that, after marrying you, I would not die… I would not marry you. **Sachokeka** is my home, so I must take a wife from **Sachokeka**. Stop troubling yourself. I already have a wife, **Namasinkho**, mine own. She is waiting for me now.'

[12.14]

Even though this reply was abrupt, **Gingiswa** did not stop urging **Bwampini** to marry her, and **Bwampini** kept turning her down. Most days **Bwampini** would cry and complain.

[12.15]

Tinjiwa, when he saw this, sent **Mapiko** to tell **Gingiswa** that she should not hinder **Bwampini** from going home. One evening, when **Bwampini** was at the shore, **Mapiko** appeared to **Gingiswa** and delivered the message from **Ntheradi**.

[12.16]

‘Why do **Tinjiwa** and the rest of you keep stalking me? You have already banished me. Why can’t you just let me be? Let me do what I desire!’ **Gingiswa** complained and cried.

‘Complain not. It is not I who say this. Just obey, because if you refuse, you could find yourself in trouble.’ When he had said this, **Mapiko** departed. When **Bwampini** returned, **Gingiswa** told him that now he could prepare to go home.

[12.17]

The poor man was delighted, even though his mind was darkened with anxiety at thought of a solitary *ulendo*. **Gingiswa** lent him an axe and other materials for making a boat. With joy filling his cheeks, he entered the forest and saw a tree, a big one. He cut it down. Work started on making the boat, then it was completed.

[12.18]

Gingiswa, even though she was not happy about it, gave him food, drink, clothes and many other gifts, and she escorted him to the shore. After they had said farewell, with all haste **Bwampini** set off on his solitary *ulendo* home.

[12.19]

Tinjiwa saw **Bwampini** and he pitied him. He sent **Mapiko** to escort him as far as his own country. **Mapiko** took gifts to reward **Bwampini**’s endurance and the strength of his heart. These gifts came from different **Azimu** in **Ntheradi**.

Chapter 13

A Bird Flies Back to Its Nest I

[13.01]

The house of **Bwampini** was set amidst small hills. The chief's house was large and very handsome. The chief had many attendants, men and women, even though some had stopped working, supposing that the owner of the house would not return.

[13.02]

When her husband went off to *nkhondo*, **Namasinkho** was heavy with child. After some time, she bore a baby boy, and she gave him the name of **Uziona**, meaning that he was born at a time of hardship. From the time her husband left, the woman's beauty remained intact. Anybody who saw her thought that she was still a *namwali*, but she was not, *ai*. When she saw that time was getting on, her sorrow increased greatly, and she began to think that maybe her husband had died on the way. **Uziona** grew up and became an upright young man. He knew that his father had gone to fight *nkhondo*, a long time ago, and he still believed that he would return.

[13.03]

People from **Buwa** grew tired of waiting for their chief. After ten years had passed, many of them believed that their chief **Bwampini** would never return. Because of this, many of them began to go astray. Many of them disregarded the law, even though there were ministers and elders occupying the stool, while they waited for **Uziona** to come of age. As such, many men, handsome, who had the looks of a chief, some from different countries, arrived at the house of **Bwampini**. They came with wealth and many other things to persuade **Namasinkho** for her hand in marriage. All desired deeply to marry her. Even though she turned them down, they continued to press her.

[13.04]

As such, the chief's house had no shortage of *alendo*. These *alendo* were eating the food that was stored within the house: the flesh of pigs, goats, cattle, sheep and chicken, also rice. Fruits of every kind, also wine, fragrant and flowing forever. All this continued day by day, so that the store and the wealth of **Bwampini** decreased little by little, even though it had been great.

[13.05]

Games of every kind were taking place within, many drunkards made noise, they hurled abuse, they even fought each other and destroyed the utensils of the house. The elders and the prime ministers of **Buwa** informed the men that, if they wished marriage, they should do everything with *ulemu*, not destroying the owner's property. But they hissed their contempt, *tsonya*, and turned their backs.

[13.06]

No one approved of the deeds that were being done in the house of Chief **Bwampini**. Many wished and desired that the **Azimu** in **Ntheradi**, especially **Tinjiwa**, would come and put to an end this outrage.

[13.07]

The outrage worked by these men also disturbed **Namasinkho** greatly. On looking at the utensils and stools being destroyed, the destruction of everything in her house, she cried and sobbed in her room.

[13.08]

One day, when the men were eating and some of them were already drunk, she left her room and came where they were eating. She stood on the stairs and said, 'You sadden me deeply. Even though you are come because of me, you are just destroying the household *katundu* and utensils. You are destroying my son's *katundu*, even though you say that you will pay it back. You have come for marriage, but you will get nothing from me, and the ship has left all of you. You will suffer!' She spoke and left.

[13.09]

This did not burn the hearts of those who desired marriage, but they just laughed. Their elder, **Phakaphaka**, strengthened their hearts, saying, 'All of you that are here, do not lose heart. Don't you know how women behave? They don't wish to accept a man on the first attempt. Their wisdom is alway to pretend to reject him, *basi*. Only a fool loses heart quickly when a girl says, "No, I refuse. *Toto*, *toto*." Tomorrow this woman will be forced until she tells us what today she is not saying. We will require her to tell us. Perhaps one of us will be chosen. If she refuses, we will have to leave this house and to surrender its wealth. **Uziona**, our little brother, is listening over there.'

[13.10]

After he had spoken, they all clapped hands for him, then **Phakaphaka** called for food and fragrant drink. There were eating and drinking and making merry. The sound of laughter increased. Those who were outside were heartbroken, because those evil men were consuming the wealth of the owner. The feast continued and **Uziona** was with them at the banquet. He too was heartbroken at what was happening, but he did not reveal it by his expression.

[13.11]

Tinjiwa pitied **Uziona** and he sent him a female messenger. While all these people were eating, **Uziona** saw a beautiful woman, with shining raiment. No one else saw her. This was **Ching'aning'ani**.

[13.12]

She extended greetings, *moni*, from **Ntheradi**, saying, 'I have been sent by my father **Tinjiwa**, to let you know that your father is not dead. He is still alive. He is on his way. Tomorrow you will meet him, and this same month, he shall re-enter his chieftainship. Now you shall keep these things in your heart, *basi*. Do not tell anyone else. When you see a bald *mlendo* with wrinkles, do not send him away. I am going.'

[13.13]

Thereafter, **Uziona** felt as if his heart would burst for joy, even though he could not share it with anyone else, including his mother. Forthwith, he called for food and drink. Then he went here and there, talking and making merry with the *alendo*, even though they were his enemies.

[13.14]

Phakaphaka, who was among those squandering **Bwampini**'s wealth, wondered greatly at **Uziona**, not understanding what had made him happy, because, for most of the time, he had drunk and eaten only a little and had been far from cheerful.

[13.15]

'You are happy today, *bwana*. What has happened? Is even **Uziona** getting drunk today?' **Phakaphaka** wondered.

Uziona answered him with *ulemu*, 'It is good sometime to be happy. Should we die from sorrow because we have no father? It is good sometime to forget.'

'So you still believe that your father will return?' **Phakaphaka** was shocked. 'Twenty years have passed and you have not lost heart. I heard from a certain friend, and most of the time he does not lie, who told me that your father perished in the storm. It is better now just to forget about it.'

'*Aaah*! If that is so, I should now start to mourn his death,' answered **Uziona** with a voice full of sorrow.

Chapter 14

A Bird Flies Back to Its Nest II

[14.01]

In **Ntheradi** too **Mapiko** had a lot of stories to tell. When he was in the company of his fellow **Azimu**, he could make them laugh alway. On seeing that **Bwampini** was filled with great sorrow, he tried to make him forget about it all. He told him many different stories. First of all, he told him the sad news of Paramount Chief **Zimeze**, who had been killed. On enquiry, **Bwampini** heard that the paramount, not knowing a thing of what was happening in his house, after *nkhondo* had ended, wished to enter within his house, but at the door he met a man who was cheating on him with his wife, **Nachimasomaso**. The man held an axe in his hands. He cast it heavenward and lopped off the head of Paramount Chief **Zimeze**. This **Nachimasomaso** had conspired with her adulterous lover.

[14.02]

Bwampini sorrowed greatly, because Paramount Chief **Zimeze** had been a very good man, but he had the bad luck to marry such a woman. Even long ago, when **Nachimasomaso** was a *namwali*, she would play around with every young man, perhaps also giving herself way. Paramount Chief **Zimeze**, even though he was a chief with a good heart, failed in only one thing, in not listening to the elders, who warned him that this *namwali* was a fool, *eedi*, a complete dumbass, a well for every man.

[14.03]

Because of this, **Bwampini** began to curse the whole tribe of women, saying that, as far as a woman is concerned, her heart is weak, easily led astray and incapable of covenant.

[14.04]

In this he disputed much with **Mapiko**, who said that there are some women who are crazy for lust, hurrying after men, calling to them and giving themselves away, even to young boys. But there are also (so **Mapiko**) others who keep covenant, of unshakeable virtue, proper girls, upright women who desire marriage, *basi*.

[14.05]

Mapiko continued to tell his friend that most of the time men are at fault when they pretend that only women make eyes at others [**chimasomaso**, cf. **Nachimasomaso**]. That is a lie, *bodza*. Faithful men do exist, but there are others who just love to leave their families, to marry here and there, to move around with any woman. Men like these do not make a specific choice. They just embrace any woman, even Mistress **Dirty**, Mistress **Does Not Wash**, Mistress **Snotty Nose**.

[14.06]

Bwampini was blessed, his friend continued, because **Namasinkho** was one to surpass all other woman and girls in avoiding and resisting lust. Many people fell into dispute intentionally, because they took no steps to avoid deceit and snares. As they talked, the boat was covering a space of water. The hills of **Buwa** began now to appear.

[14.07]

Bwampini, on hearing his friend's report, rejoiced, because in his heart he had doubted his wife. He believed that women just wish to change their men, like a headcloth.

[14.08]

Bwampini was indeed blessed, **Mapiko** continued, because, after twenty years, if **Namasinkho** had been a different woman, it is likely that she would have married elsewhere and probably would have grandchildren. But **Namasinkho** did not do that and she awaited her husband.

[14.09]

'Is my house well?' **Bwampini** asked, concerned.

[14.10]

Mapiko explained to his friend that all was not entirely well at his house. There were many men who wished to propose to his wife, but she kept on turning them down. Food and wealth had almost come to an end. All was confusion. It was important that, on reaching his house, he should keep his wits about him.

[14.11]

Mapiko also informed **Bwampini** that he should not be afraid, because **Tinjiwa** had promised to protect him from his enemies. **Mapiko** himself had come to assist until **Bwampini** reached his own door. He informed him further that there had been born a baby boy at the time when he had left to go to *nkhondo*, and his name was **Uziona**. Now **Uziona** had indeed come of age (**msinkhu**, cf. **Namasinkhu**].

[14.12]

On hearing this, **Bwampini** rejoiced. Even though he had faced many problems in his life, there were also good things. The birth of **Uziona** was one of the good things. The boat was near the shore of **Buwa**. When they had drawn the boat ashore, they brought out all the *katundu* from the boat and put it in a safe place. There was a great *katundu*, wealth surpassing **Bwampini**'s wealth of old. Even Paramount Chief **Zimeze** did not possess such wealth, for the gifts of **Tinjiwa** were great.

[14.13]

When they had brought out all the *katundu*, **Mapiko** told his friend to plan their approach. He began by hiding the *katundu*. He told him that, for the meantime, it were better if people should not know of his return. Therefore, **Bwampini** should turn into an old man. **Mapiko** turned into a young boy of **Buwa**.

[14.14]

Straightaway, they both transformed! One was an old man, with wrinkles, the other a young boy. They accompanied each other to **Bwampini**'s house. Before they had even arrived, they heard the noise of drunk and belching people. The old man was not pleased at what he heard and saw. They both walked and reached the door. They knocked, *gogoda*. The first to open was **Uziona**. He saw a young boy and an old man, with wrinkles. On seeing this, he remembered the words of **Ching'aning'ani** and at once he realised that his father had returned to **Buwa**.

[14.15]

Everyone was busy about the feast: food and fragrant drink were served. **Uziona** ordered a plate, so that the *alendo* should eat from it, but some elders were not pleased at that. Those fools were eating the food that should have been reserved for the children of chiefs. **Bwampini** ate and drank with fear. When he looked outside [at the *bwalo*] it was already dark without, yet the people inside the house danced, ate, drank and made merry. Since it was dark, those that wanted to sleep went to sleep. **Bwampini** asked for a place to sleep with his friend, **Mapiko**. All that he asked for he received, and he went to sleep with vigilance, *tcheru*.

Chapter 15

Mbamba and Ching'aning'ani

[15.01]

The previous night, dreams had been killing **Namasinkho**. She had dreamt that her husband had returned. The following morning, when she arose, her strength failed, and her whole body was weak. There was no strength in her. Were her dreams true? At dawn, when **Bwampini** arrived, just like the day before, with **Mapiko**, the hearts of all in **Buwa** began to pound wildly, *thithithi*. The heavens pounded with thunder, *gugululu*, and there were flashes [mbamba] and lightnings [zing'aning'ani], but the sun continued to shine fiercely. Great fear seized the elderly, mothers, young girls, young boys, sheep, goats, cows, chickens, birds and all animals that live in water and on land.

[15.02]

Those men who desired marriage with **Namasinkho** were also afraid, but they did not stop eating and drinking after the hour had come to break their fast. **Bwampini**, since he had already been informed by his friend, **Mapiko**, of the ceremony that would happen that day, understood and told his son, **Uziona**, even though he was not fully aware, that today was the day of justice.

[15.03]

Tinjiwa had sent **Mziisi**, **Mbamba** and **Ching'aning'ani** to punish those men, insolent and greedy, who were squandering another man's wealth.

[15.04]

Those that looked closely to the heavens, at **Ntheradi**, saw three birds, very large ones, the size of dogs, approaching from afar. Those with ears heard, like the rushing of a great wind, the sound of thunder, *gugululu*, strikes and lightnings [zing'aning'ani], louder and louder. Wise men understood that the **Azimu** wished to punish the country of **Buwa**, but they did not know the reason why.

[15.05]

Those who had started to eat stopped eating, out of fear. Some tried to eat but their hands shook and they missed their mouths. The birds landed atop the house of **Bwampini**. Those that saw them ran away, because they had come in wrath. Straightaway, the birds turned into people, two female and one male, and they all carried swords.

[15.06]

Thereupon, they disappeared, invisible to human eyes. All three entered within the house but they could not be seen by those men. **Bwampini** and **Uziona**, even though they were people, had been granted power to see with eyes of a **Mzimu** for that moment

alone. **Mbamba** barred every door fast so that no one who was there could escape; the windows too were barred fast. Thereafter, **Mziisi**, queen and commander of *nkhondo*, cried out furiously and startled all the young men and the whole city of **Buwa**.

[15.07]

'Evil and greedy people, you will suffer, you who have destroyed the great wealth of **Bwampini**. You have consumed his food; you have troubled his wife, **Namasinkho**. Today the owner has come, he is here, but you have not recognised him! Because of your folly, today you will receive the reward of your lust and madness.'

[15.08]

Immediately, there were lightnings [zing'aning'ani]; strikes and flashes [mbamba] cracked terribly. At the same time **Mziisi**, **Mbamba** and **Ching'aning'ani** crushed the heads of everyone there. They all died!

[15.09]

'People of **Buwa**, come and take your deceased, but do not cry, for if you do, you will face far worse things, for this death was delivered by **Tinjiwa**. These children of yours were not honest, they were thieves, wicked, and their hearts were of flint. Hear this. Your chief **Bwampini** has returned to his chieftainship. Today you cannot see him, for he is occupied, but tomorrow.'

[15.10]

The words of the preacher were heard loud and clear, so that everyone in **Buwa** spoke and whispered to their friends, saying, 'This is good.' They all delighted at the news. Those that were related to the deceased came to collect their bodies and sobbed as they did so. Some they buried close by [together]. There was a huge number of funerals, but the dead went unmourned, unclothed even with loin cloths.

[15.11]

After everything had been settled in the house of **Bwampini**, there were heard singing and the loud sounding of horns. **Chezichezi** sang two songs; the first one, describing the wickedness of the young men that were killed. In the second, **Chezichezi** sang a song of *ulendo* of **Bwampini**, *nkhondo* against the **Agangire**, and all the bad luck that they had encountered.

[15.12]

Thereupon, they all sorrowed and wept with **Namasinkho** for the troubles which her husband had faced, and too, they all delighted that their chief had returned alive. The most delighted were **Namasinkho** and **Uziona**. When **Bwampini** had taken a stool, food, unctuous flesh, was roasted and offered. Rice and other aromatic foods were offered, then they ate and drank. This was a day of joy. They laughed and stories were shared; joy and blessings filled the whole house. His attendants also got drunk and ate to the point of rupture, 'Our Lord has returned. Let us rejoice.'

[15.13]

At dawn, other chiefs and their people brought gifts of different kinds to visit their chief. **Bwampini** and his family, on rising in the morning, amazed greatly at the crowd of those people. Forthwith, **Bwampini** bathed and dressed as befits Chief **Bwampini**, and he went out with his family. When he arrived where the people had gathered, drums were beaten and hands were all but broken [of drummers, of those clapping], everyone cried aloud and shouted.

'Long live Chief **Bwampini**!'

[15.14]

Thereupon, three children stood up, dressed in very attractive clothes, and they had brought with three bunches of flowers: red, white and yellow. Those flowers were fair, and they were presented to the chief, who received them with great joy.

[15.15]

After all this, **Lipenga**, who was preeminent in the art of speaking, first minister to **Bwampini**, cried aloud, saying, 'All these people, when they see you today, appear as if they have received the lost treasure of the country of **Buwa**. Your chieftainship, your wisdom without rival to compete, we did not forget; you left a long time ago – many young men that are now shaving their beards were not yet born. All your people are wondering today at the lies of your enemies, which were spread everywhere, that you had died a long time ago. Today, those people are running away, and some have already run away. Upon remembering your troubles, just as we heard them yesterday in the song of **Chezichezi**, we cry with you and, especially, we ask you, *pepa*, that your heart should forgive and forget. Receive our small gifts, unworthy as they are.' Thereupon, he gave the chief: utensils that were very skilfully made, fat livestock, *zitenje* that were sewn well and with craft, stitched with gold, with the craftsmanship of **Ntheradi**. In response, **Bwampini** stood up and spoke briefly:

[15.16]

'Reverend ladies and elders, I thank you, now that I have returned to my home, that you have welcomed me with open arms. If you had been a different kind of people, you could have denied that I am **Bwampini**, but you did not. Your gifts shew your peace and your love toward your chief. I doubt not at all that everything will be well, just as it was before. Do not forget that the **Abuwa** have excelled alway in wisdom and peace toward *alendo* and they understand each other. Do not change this heart of yours.'

[15.17]

Thereafter, **Bwampini** sat down. Thereupon, **Lipenga** shouted, saying, 'This afternoon we will celebrate a feast near the house of the chief. Do what the **Abuwa** do when there is a feast.' They all scattered and made preparation. Some began to hunt down chickens, others stuck pigs, cattle and goats. The women were busy with cooking. The

afternoon drew near, horns and drums sounded in **Buwa**, the feast was close. The people began to gather. The women brought with food that was already cooked, with a good smell. After all had gathered – elders, young boys and young girls – **Bwampini** and his family also took their place, just as they had prepared.

[15.18]

People began to eat and drink. Many of them got drunk. The young boys danced *mganda*, the young girls danced *likwata*, and the elders danced *njazo*. The people were not fully prepared with *zibiya*, but they danced amazingly,

[15.19]

The dances were many, but the dance that delighted **Bwampini** most was *njazo*. The elders were the ones who performed this dance while singing their song.

[15.20]

> ‘**Bwampini**, Thou hast returned, *wawa*! Is this true? We lost a wise man without peer.
>
> We heard of Thy horse among the **Agangire**.
>
> Thy *ulendo* was fearsome, we know:
>
> The biting **Asongo**, the **Baboon People**, finished most of our people, our relatives!
>
> **Chikutumbwe** also, the greedy fellow, left the goats
>
> and the sheep. He ate our relatives.
>
> **Namatsenga** also wished to turn
>
> our relatives into pigs, and she did! The baleful crab and
>
> the **Amphalusa**, they finished our relatives.
>
> Also the baleful storm… What did we do to it

That it should end our relatives?'

[15.21]

People danced late; they ate and drank their fill. Darkness made people to look for their doors. Even so, the young girls took their songs back to their kitchens, singing all the way, like this:

[15.22]

'Our chief has returned, our chief of surpassing wisdom.

Whom could we find to surpass **Bwampini**?

When a man is born, his lot alway is to face trouble; indeed.

But Thou, **Buwa**, art Thou not grateful that Thou hast been given

A wise man, with skill, hard working and strong,

Chief **Bwampini**?'

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