

the Lozi whose dominance at the district and provincial level dwindled only slowly, but who in Zambian national politics were more and more pushed to a peripheral position. In this national linking process the chiefs, with their lack of education, economic and political power, and being the prisoners of court protocol, could only fulfil a symbolic function, even though some of them have served as nominated members of District Councils, District Development Councils, and even of the national House of Chiefs (van Binsbergen 1988c). The main task in the desired centripetal movement fell to the urban Nkoya 'elite' (in fact mainly lower- and middle-range civil servants and salaried workers), and with this task in mind the most prominent among them formed the Kazanga Cultural Association in the early 1980s. In subsequent years, this association has played its self- assigned role impressively: providing an urban reception structure for prospective migrants, contributing to Nkoya Bible translation and the publication of ethno-historical texts, assuming a considerable role at the royal courts next to (and with inevitable friction with!) the traditional royal councils, and campaigning against the Lozi and for the Nkoya cause within various political parties and publicity media, including television and the Internet.

The association's main achievement, however, has been the annual organisation (since 1988) of the Kazanga festival, in the course of which a large audience (including Zambian national dignitaries, the four Nkoya royal chiefs, Nkoya nationals and outsiders), for two days is treated to a very extensive overview of Nkoya songs, dances and staged rituals.

I. WHY SHOULD NKOYA MUSICAL EXPRESSIONS BE DOMINANT IN WESTERN ZAMBIA? For the larger part of the past 150 years the Nkoya have been in a subaltern, subservient position *vis-à-vis* the dominant Lozi – while also in the modern Zambian towns the Nkoya have for decades been considered a despised minority up to the 1980s. Yet even 'Lozi' court music, its song lyrics, even its performers, are of Nkoya origin; and a prominent tradition<sup>176</sup> has it that an early 19-c. CE Luyi king (before the Kololo invasion the dominant group in the Zambezi Flood Plain appears to be known under the name Luyi, instead of Lozi), Mulambwa, humbly requested 'Nkoya' music, and 'Nkoya' king-making and king-protecting medicine, so as to secure his own position among the Luyi. (I put *Nkoya* between quotation marks because even that name appears an anachronism for early 19<sup>th</sup>-c. CE situations – as an ethnonym, the name Nkoya, deriving from a wooded area on the Zambezi-Kabompo confluence, gained ascendance in the context of Kololo / Lozi / Luyi political control of all of Western Zambia, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c.) I do not think that the complex musical situation can be fully explained from the long-range regional dynamics within South Central Africa alone. My research of the past decade, into sub-Saharan Africa's transcontinental continuities (as well as my own amateur steps in Indian ancient court music, as a student of percussion) is now offering an answer:<sup>177</sup> the Nkoya states, those of the Lozi, and in general those of the Lunda cluster to which both groups peripherally belong, and generally held to have emerged in the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> mill. CE, may be considered remnants of a South Asian-derived, largely Buddhist-informed state system more or less controlling South Central Africa in the

<sup>176</sup> *Likota Iya Bankoya*, 24 and 56; van Binsbergen 1992: 79 and *passim*.




<sup>177</sup> Cf. van Binsbergen in press (a), in press (b), 2012g – the latter including a compelling Buddhist interpretation of Great Zimbabwe.

late 1<sup>st</sup> and early 2<sup>nd</sup> mill. CE – and featuring, among others, such activities as music-making and metallurgy, both of them traits traditionally associated with the earliest Nkoya kings. These activities highlight these Nkoya kings' affinities with 'Gypsy' emigrants from South Asia who spread all over the globe, including sub-Saharan Africa – taking refuge from Islamic Moghul rule in India, and its insistence on circumcision. The Kahare kingship, which likewise has a mythical tradition of rejecting circumcision (van Binsbergen 1992b, 1993b) even has 'Kale' as nickname – a widespread Gypsy name meaning 'Black One', notably in South Asian languages such as Singhalese. Another influence on this South Central African state complex seems to have been Shivaite Chola princes taking refuge when their South Asian empire collapsed by the 14<sup>th</sup> c. CE; and also the Chola had elaborate royal orchestras. I take it that this musical tradition has continued to lend legitimacy to this state system's South Central African successors, even if these have now very largely shed their conscious recollections of South Asia and Buddhism. Yet such Nkoya names as Shikanda;<sup>178</sup> Mangala (< South Asian Mangala, the planet god Mars); the word *mukupele* 'hourglass drum' (< *mahabera*, 'big drum', in Singhalese); the Nkoya's legendary origin from Kola, *cf.* the *Mahabharata* Kuru, South Asian Kola as ethnic and language name, *etc.* – in Sanskrit, **कोल** *kola* means 'pig, hog' Monier-Williams 1899: 256), and it may not be by accident that the earliest Nkoya kings are supposed to have left the capital of Mwata Yamvo – 'Lord Death' – in protest at being housed at or near the pig sties; the mythical Nkoya king Kapeshe, associated with the solar or lunar *Conus* shell disc and with the Tower into Heaven, *cf.* King Kashyapa (Sanskrit: *kaśyapa* कश्यप 'with black teeth', Monier-Williams 1899: 215) from the Buddhist Jataka stories and the Lankan Sigiriya tradition (van Binsbergen, in press (a)). Many other details only noticeable from a South Asian perspective, substantiate my claim of a Nkoya / South Asian link.

Of course, what we have here is a form of bricolage and of invention of tradition (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983): for it would have been impossible to completely revive the nineteenth-century CE Kazanga harvest festival, which comprised only one royal instead of – as currently – four at a time (which is traditionally impossible because the king is supposed to be the one and only hub of the universe), but also human sacrifices. The details of the present-day Kazanga festival I have treated at length elsewhere, and I shall here mainly focus on the virtuality theme.

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<sup>178</sup> Shikanda, from: Skanda / Karttikeya / Murugan / Subrahmanya, the South Asian war god whose name is often associated with that of the Macedonian king Alexander the Great / Iskander, who – in the legendary footsteps of the Greek god Dionysos and pharaoh Sesostrius / Senwosret I / III – reached India in the late 4<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, and lives on in an epic cycle distributed from the Mediterranean to South and South East Asia – Gopala Pillai n.d.; Harrigan n.d. Like

the Ancient Egyptian gods  Horus,  Tefnut and  Shu – and humanity as a whole in the Zulu cosmogony; Colenso 1855: 239 *f.* – he is reputedly born in a thicket of reeds (hence the epithet *Saravanabhava*), and his name has the same meaning in Sanskrit, 'soaring high', as that of the legendary prince Luhamba in Nkoya. My own Nkoya name is Tatashikanda *i.e.* *Shikanda's* (my middle daughter's) *Father*. Yet the name Shikanda can also be given a local etymology, notably: 'of the Mukanda puberty and circumcision rite' – *cf.* Turner 1967c; van Binsbergen 1993b.