

KWIYO KWIYO

This is a traditional wedding song. It is a simple tune and children sing it on other occasions as well. People bring various gifts to a wedding celebration including flour to use for making *nsima*, (a thick porridge-like substance which is a staple food in Malawi), money, potatoes maize and even living chickens. *Kwiyo kwiyo* is the cooing sound of a chicken. People dance and sing this song while guests offer the gifts they have brought. The words of the song encourage people to give generously, even if the chicken they have brought is very small.

BILIMANKHWE

Bilimankhwe is the vernacular name for chameleon. This is a story telling song which depicts a conversation between chameleon and curious children who want to know why chameleon has protruding eyes. The song advises children to be sympathetic, and therefore not hostile to chameleons. One day, a group of children were on their way to school when they saw Bilimankhwe slowly making his way across the road. They stopped and began to laugh at his huge, bulging eyes and asked him: *"Bilimankhwe, why are your eyes bulging like that?"* Bilimankhwe turned his head slightly and fixed his gaze on them. *"Do not laugh at me, children. I have lost my whole family. I have been crying, mourning for the deaths of my relatives. This is what has led to the swelling of my eyes".*

KADYAKOLO

Lake Malawi is the third largest lake in Africa. People that live by its shores often earn their living by fishing, using dug out canoes and large fishing nets. Kadyakolo is one of the many species of fish living in Lake Malawi. This song is usually sang while men are pulling nets from the lake. They sing about kadyakolo in the hope that they will find some in the net they are pulling. Many people in Malawi like to eat the entire fish, including the head, tail and sometimes bones. In the song, kadyakolo is being described as having a delicious head, but bitter intestines

TAMBALA WALIRA

Tambala is the cock or rooster. The bird is very significant in Malawi. In the rural areas it is used as a timekeeper, especially at night. During the day people use the position of the sun to tell rough estimates of time. It is common for someone to say, *"I will meet you when the sun gets to ..."* and point with the arm to a position on the horizon. Many people refer to the cock crows when talking about the time very early in the morning because there is no sun. *Kugwira tambala pakamwa* is a proverb which literally translates, *"to hold the cock's mouth"*, meaning someone has left very early, even before the first cock Tambala was also a very important political symbol when Malawi gained its independence from the British Government in 1964. Tambala was used as the sign of a *"new day"*, the dawn of a new nation. Tambala Walira is a song by Michael Fred Sauka, the composer of the Malawi National Anthem. In the song, he talks about a cock which crows early in the morning waking people to go to work in their fields. He also talks about laziness which retards the development of any nation. The song teaches that hard work and sweat will bring freedom.

KUMTENGO WAMOYO

The Christian missionary influence in Malawian education system is deep-rooted because western education was first brought to Malawi by the missionaries before the government took control. But even after taking control the government has always worked in collaboration with the Christian missionaries in the management of schools. Kumtengo wamoyo which translates *at the tree of life*, is one of the songs sung at Sunday schools and got its way into the classrooms. It is a Christmas song talking about the nativity story of Jesus Christ.

Galuyu Ngwandani

People in Malawi depend mostly on fish for their food. Lake Malawi and many other rivers provide wide a variety of small fish. You can often find many of these fish that have been caught placed out on the shores to dry in the sun. One of the people's favourite kinds of fish is called *matemba*. This song humorously tells the story of *galu*, or dog, which has eaten *matemba*. The dog has taken the *matemba* while people were not paying attention. Now they are thinking of what to do with the dog. Some suggest out of anger that they should dissect *galu* to get back the fish from its abdomen, for it is surely an insult to let a tasty fish be eaten by a dog. This is a song typically sung by young children.

Pamchenga

After school, children like to play in the sand since it is free of rocks and dangerous animals like snakes and scorpions. In the song, children are asking each other to read the vowels they have written in the sand. They write the vowels of the alphabet in the sand, recalling what they learnt during the day at school. This song has even been brought into classroom by teachers to help the young children to learn the vowel sounds.

FULU CHIGOBA PAMSANA

One of the reptiles that are becoming scarce these days are tortoises. Although this is the case, Malawi has so many tales and folklores where tortoises are depicted and as such, it will be difficult to totally forget the reptile. The Malawian vernacular name for tortoise is *Fulu* and the shell on its back is called *chigoba*. So the song talks about the tortoise with the shell on its back. This is a game song where children sing the song while in a circle squatting. They move slowly following the beat of the song with one person leading and the rest responding.

Nzama

Nzama is a type of peas commonly grown in rural areas of Malawi. The song talks about this type of peas, saying that it is delicious with a little salt. People are therefore invited to taste it. Children sing this song for entertainment at school or at home when they are playing. They line up in a circle and dance moving sideways while holding their knees.

CHANGA

Changa is the Chichewa name for bushbaby. A bushbaby is a nocturnal animal with huge eyes, and gets its English name because at night, it makes a loud noise that sounds like a baby crying. This song is somewhat a joke since few people in Malawi will eat changa. In the song, someone is encouraging people to eat Changa meat, and she goes on to explain how best to prepare it. The person says adding salt makes the meat good, but it is even more delicious if you add groundnut flour, which is even ridiculous, since it is strange to add groundnut flour to meat in Malawi

TIMAYENDA GO!

The majority of school children in Malawi, especially those who live in the rural areas cannot afford shoes. In such areas, owning a pair of shoes is something of a status symbol. Usually children who own shoes are regarded as well to do and are therefore admired by those who cannot afford a pair. The song depicts the fortunate few who have shoes and are proud of them. The children say, "go! go! go!" as they walk, imitating the sound that their shoes make.

TSOPANO TATHA KUPHUNZIRA

Children in Malawi are like any other children in the world. They look forward to the time for leaving school, so they can go outside to play. Here they sing about how happy they are, that the lessons are over for the day and that they can go home to eat. Children often sing this song as they are knocking off from school.