

## Chimbwira choka

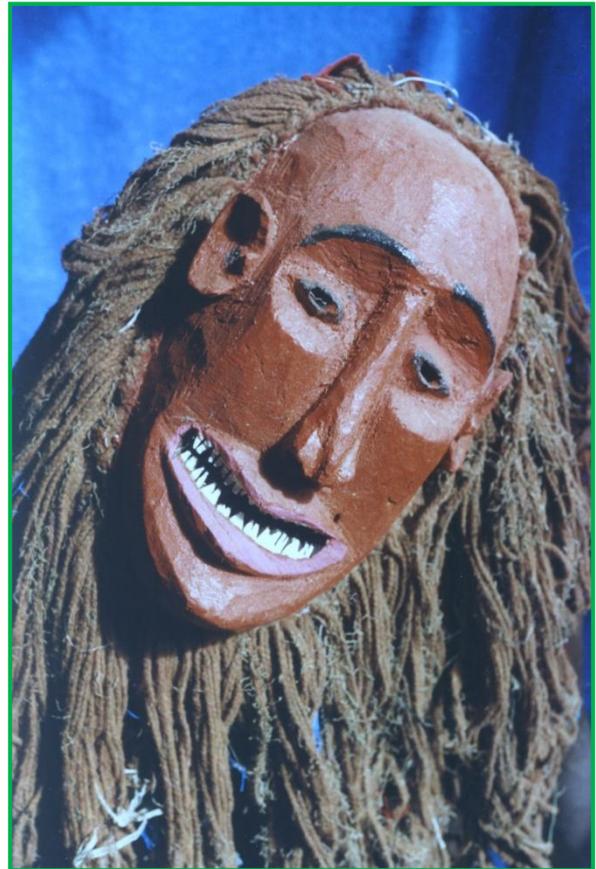
(A red day mask from the Mua area)

### Themes

- 1) Importance of extended family (*mbumba*)
- 2) Infertility – impotence

### Etymology

**Chimbwira choka** means, 'Go away, you impotent man!'



### Description

The mask (30 cm.) is red and has a flat, oval face, a bald head, small eyes and a long nose. The very wide mouth has teeth and seems to groan in disappointment. The red colour and the bark attachments stress the status of an outcast or a person red with anger. The dancer wears a tattered *gule* suit and carries a spear and a ceremonial axe. He swerves his feet while exposing his thighs in order to suggest his sexual inability. This character used to perform at initiation ceremonies. The men sing for him: 1) "You impotent man, go away! You prevent me from having grandchildren! (Let my daughter find a husband since you cannot do a thing in bed!) By your anus, go away! Go away! Go away!" or 2) "You impotent man, go away. Let my child marry... You cannot do a thing in bed!"

The character seems to combine the chased and the chaser in the same person. The song voices the complaint of the head (*malume*) of the wife's family, who believes that **Chimbwira** is under a spell of witches or evil spirits and therefore cannot procreate. The *malume* is furious that his sister's daughter has no children. This means that there will be no grandchildren either. He will be denied the care of the *mbumba* (extended family) and the position of a maternal uncle. As a consequence, the family may come to an end. Moreover, if his niece belongs to the chief's line, she cannot produce an heir to the chief's position. The only solution to be found is in **Chimbwira's** departure from her home. She must remarry a man who can give her children and grandchildren

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so that the family line may continue. Then the *malume* can rule over them, enjoying his privileges, and provide the village with a potential chief from his own family group.

### **Songs**

- 1) "***Chimbwira choka*** (2x)! *Ukutsekera mfumukazi! Mtsempha wa pa nyo, choka! choka! choka!*"
- 2) "***Chimbwira choka*** (2x)! *Mwana wanga akwatire...sukwata!*"

### **Source**

Interviews in 1992 and 2000