

# Wakudza

(A black day mask from the Dedza and Diamphwi areas)

## Themes

- 1) Caution with strangers
- 2) Living off other people (community parasite)
- 3) Hypocrisy/split personality/duplicity

## Etymology

**Wakudza** means, 'the intruder'.



## Description

The black oval mask (30 cm.) portrays the face of an intruder who comes as a guest but is not truly welcome. The black face alerts the host to his suspicious behaviour, his lack of manners, his slanders and criticisms. He is suspected of even more serious crimes. He appears as a middle aged person, half bald, wrinkled, with a flat nose and bushy eyebrows. His eyes are distrustful, and the mouth shows teeth, which suggests a vociferous person. Included on the mask is a moustache, a goatee and distorted ears. The white cowlick falling on his forehead suggests a person of honourable reputation, as does the tatter headgear of his mask. **Wakudza** wears black trousers and a white shirt, suggesting that his personality is tinted with hypocrisy. He carries a staff and a flywhisk, signs of his ambition and desire to rule.

**Wakudza** appeared as a *gule* character at the beginning of the 1980s and his presence is not linked to any specific ritual. He enters the arena to the rhythm of Simoni, the colonialist. As a guest at someone's home, he demonstrates his full potential by swerving his feet with tremendous energy, but soon his stamina fails. Finally, he departs the arena with hardly any strength left in him. The men sing for him: *"The intruder, the ungrateful, the ungrateful one! We met this one, this very one, this very one, the intruder, the ungrateful one! As you may recall, He forgot when he came, the intruder,*

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*the ungrateful one!*" The song suggests that the intruder came as a guest, but soon the host regrets having welcomed him into his house. He is like a relative who visits for a short stay but remains forever. He has no manners and imposes himself. He starts behaving as if he is the owner of the house (staff and flywhisk). He is critical and demanding. He expects to be fed and even helps himself from the granary of his host. In the end, he dominates his host and becomes the master of his host's home.

**Wakudza** warns villagers about such prospects when welcoming a guest. Times have changed and people today do not behave with the same sincerity. Hospitality may be worthy, but caution is prescribed for fear that a brother or a friend can change into an enemy. One's own generosity can bring upon oneself and one's own family endless court cases and even the loss of rights and possessions.

Another reading of the song would see in the guest of the 1980s the person of none other than Kamuzu Banda and his intrusive autocracy.

### **Song**

*"**Wakudza** sakonzeka de sakonzeka de e tate ye! Tawonera yawa, yawa, yawa de (2x), **Wakudza** sakonzeka de! Paja anaiwala kabweredwe tate ye, **Wakudza** sakonzeka!"*

### **Source**

Interviews in 1993 and 2002