

**THE RITUALS AND DANCE OF NAMIBIA:
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND
AND MANIFESTATION**

By Francois H. Tsoubaloko

3. Traditional dance

Traditional music and dance in Africa are most linked to rituals or social functions, as the immediate reference to human being, to moral being, to spirit, to conscience, to human traditional and rural life, transmitted from generation to generation. Dance is part of culture, which is acquired and developed through informal education. All these performances are linked to the core of specific world of ideas and beliefs. They also reveal a certain outlook of the world and life for certain human structure, the understanding of which brings it closer and makes it easier to us. It is a lineage of knowledge through practice, training and self access. There exists a very good developed system of music and dance in place, most are on a special rhythmic system. The following given names of dances are the dominant ones in the country, but they might be some out there that are not yet discovered, linked to rituals, healings, social gatherings etc.

3.1 Outjina and Omuhiva.

Among the herero community, outjina is danced by men and omuhiva by females. The two take place during celebrations and social evenings.

3.2 Okunderera.

This military marching type of dance takes place during celebrations, especially on the 26th August, which is the National hero's day and at same time herero day. The herero community celebrates this event at Okahandja seventy kilometer north of Windhoek. This day for the community serves to pay tribute to chief Maherero and the other herero fallen heroes in the history of the liberation struggle.

3.3 Oudano or Uudhano.

Within the Aawambo people, this dance is a very common one. It is danced in two versions: The first performed by adult women, using slow motion, men are welcomed if they wish so, the second performed by girls with fast motion.

3.4 Omupembe:

This dance among the Aangadjera people was forbidden in the past by the South African regime of occupation, for its nature that resembles military training practice. Young men during this dance jump over other people's heads.

3.5 Ondjongo:

Among the Ovazemba and Ovahimba communities, this dance is performed at any social social celebration. It involves both men and women, songs are also known as ondjongo.

3.6 Okankula and Onkandeka

The first is play performed by elder people in a seated position, the second is also a fighting play performed by young people.

3.7 Omutjopa:

Accompanied by two traditional drums, omutjopa is also a dance performed by the Ovazemba community.

3.7 Shipero:

This dance involves also drums and danced during social recreation functions, in north-east Kavango.

3.8 Epera:

Three drums of different sizes are involved in this dance that takes place at the royal family's functions, it is also being used during other rituals.

3.9 Divare:

This dance takes place during the healing rituals.

3.10 Ukambe, Kambamba and Nondere:

The first dance is known as rain season dance, second is a quick dance with feet and the last one last one as hand and neck dance, all from Kavango region.

3.11 Kayote, Niakasanda, Liyala.

In the Caprivi region, three names of dances take place during healing functions.

Conclusion:

Although informal, music and dance education plays a big role in traditional societies in Africa. Special and unique systems are in place for the transmission of this unrenowable and unreplaceable knowledge as archetypal and molding systems of societies. Music and dance are not vague activities. They are not only organized for the simple reason of entertainment, they represent a true sense of human existence, through them flow a diversity of expressions, the true identification in one's culture. Traditional music and dance should not be considered as rudimentary, primitive, archaic or childish. They both identify people as tribe, district, region and a nation, where the songs and dance really live, come into being and inseparable with the life of the society where they have appeared.

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By Francois Haipinge Tsubaloko

Introduction

Namibia, situated on the South-west part of Africa, is one of the largest countries in the continent, known before independence as South West Africa, with a circumference of 825,000 km. The country has a population of about 2 millions of inhabitants P.H. census (1994-p7). The Country borders in the North with the Republic of Angola, in the North east with Zambia, in the East with Botswana, the South with The Republic of South Africa, in the West is the Atlantic Ocean.

Two big distinct groups constitute its population, the bantus and non-bantus. The bantu word referred to people who moved from the great lakes of the central part of Africa and scattered in the southern part of the continent. They still have many words in common wherever they found themselves and in some instances they can understand each other without any translation. The word bantu is not accepted by everybody in Africa, to identify a given group of people simply because it describes people as human being whatever their languages or color of the skin. The non-bantus people are those who speak languages that have no similarities with the Bantus, considered to be autochthonous, some came from different directions, the last one is a mixed up of colors between white and black, know as coloured or Baster. The vast majority of white community in Namibia resulted from the colonial system the country went through.

A country should not only be recognized by its geographical boundaries but also by what it contains in terms of cultural heritage, that makes us a unique people or different from other nations. These are: The languages we speak, the way we dress, traditional architecture, traditional technology, traditional storage, whether forecast, beverage and traditional cuisine, ritual at birth and death, traditional weddings, traditional healing, cultivation and harvesting, traditional trade, cattle exhibition, rituals before hunting and fishing, names given to venues and domestic animals, circumcision, funerals, traditional songs and dances, story telling and evening gatherings etc.

In the center of traditional education lies a proper understanding of necessary equipment of a good person in our traditional societies. A good man in the society starts with African concepts of culture and meaning in life, of course this includes gender and ages. Over the years, these cultural aspects may go through changes and some not, without notice by the concerned society. Various situations in life may be at the center of these changes. The locations where people live or climatic situation, echo tourism, drought and famine, wars, movement on both directions, emigrations. Major changes in the Namibian traditional societies, have been also caused by Christianity and colonialism.

Cultural changes in our societies are inevitable as we form part of the global village, and cultural continuity also will prevail in some aspects despite some Western and modern influences on our cultural setups. The acquisition of the African Cultural knowledge is by doing it in a routine way, imitation, observation and inclusion. Different from the Western world, the African traditional education is based on the informal system, but produces a very solid foundation that can last many years. Some of these cultural aspects are acquired in an archetype form and apprenticeship, involving a master or mentor to mould a member of the society in a certain cultural skill on a self wish, the society or parents. This knowledge can be on the following: Traditional healing, traditional instruments, whether forecast, etc.

Namibia being part of Africa, cultural aspects mentioned above are still prevailing, although many of them have vanished. This book will look at rituals, meaning and their contribution in the society, locations where these rituals are found. The book also talks about the Namibian contemporary music and foreign influences.

The country's cultural aspects should not be ignored and should not stand as things of no values, things of the past life, rudimentary, primitive, archaic or childish. We should always remember that a nation without culture is a non existing one.

Background

This work has been done in the territory where citizens in the past have been denied not only the freedom of movement but also the free practice of their own culture. In some instances they have been imposed to practice the imported or the culture of the master. Taking into account the self-determination achieved in 1990, Namibia has been working for the reconstruction of the really autochthonous cultural history of the Nation.

We know that this work is done in difficult condition, despite the willingness and motivation of the Government to assist. The financial means at the disposal of those who are involved in the research of this nature are scarce, when the grant is there, it does not sometimes cover the cost of the all project. Since independence, the Government has embarked upon many reforms and projects in its different institutions. Thus, it makes it difficult for culture storage endeavours to be completed within a short period.

Indeed it's a great honor and satisfaction for the Namibian people today, through research of this nature to revive the National Cultural Identity through some existing rituals and other activities which retrace the chart of proper manifestation of the integral cultural image of the Nation, an African derivation.

Pride should also be seen in some families who yesterday were humiliated, isolated in their own society's structures and also considered to be sinners for the simple reason to be attached to their own rituals and the involvement in cultural activities as the church, the colonizers and their own families put pressure on them. Today these families are a pride of the National Heritage conservancy that the country cherishes so much.

The Namibian African culture has suffered a lot. If the country today still possess what it has to identify itself with, that means it had an enormous amount of cultural diversity which vanished during the period of occupation.

This book is an endeavour and tentative to discover values and the cultural diversity contained in the territory and try to safeguard this wealth for present and future generations. The diverse culture of Namibia is an identity and pride of the country.

CHAPTER ONE

1.OVERVIEW ON THE NAMIBIAN RITUALS AND DANCE

Although one may argue that a lot has disappeared in Namibia because of different periods of colonialism and Christianity, the country has many cultural aspects as National heritage that has received Government revaluation and promotion as part of National policy, National reconstruction and reconciliation after self-determination.

The Namibian culture in the global context as a nation should be considered as an African entity. It has been and will still be part of Africa. Of course with the policy of National reconciliation stipulated in the National constitution, the national heritage includes cultural aspects of the white community in the country as citizens.

The vast majority of the Namibian cultural identity is constituted by bantu's derivation, having their roots in the great lakes, in the central Africa part of the continent, a pure black integration of Africa, and also other autochthonous groups including those coming from other directions. Culture being dynamic, with the regional, continental and global influences, it is evident that culture is dynamic thus, many cultural aspects have changed, will continue to change but certainly the African reality will survive. Some rituals and traditional dances that are part of this book will enlighten on the Namibian African tradition.

1.1 RELIGIOUS MUSIC IN NAMIBIA

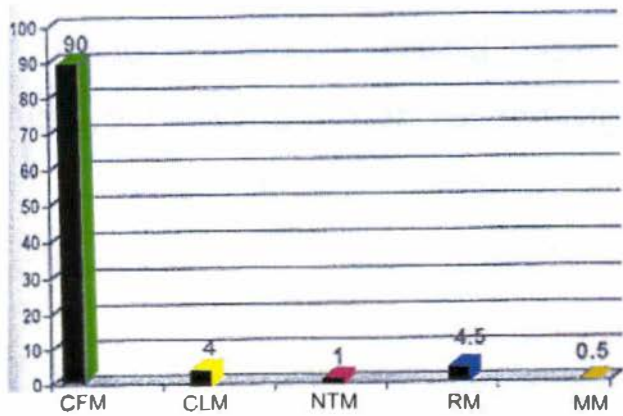
Christianity and other foreign churches have influenced the Namibian population. The first churches to be introduced in the country are: Evangelic Lutheran, Methodist, Catholic, and Anglican churches. The services in these churches are organized in the same way as it is in other countries, although songs are translated in local languages.

The first western instruments to enter Namibia came through churches. These are: The harmonium, the big church organ and the acoustic guitar. The European musical harmony is well established in the country in the detriment of the native church song considered to be the music of the sinner in the past. The format of a choir is well known in the country and practiced. The traditional church song is sung in a unison form and does not enforce the rules and laws of Western harmony, although people do adapt another voice to the main one, or men singing an octave under the female voice.

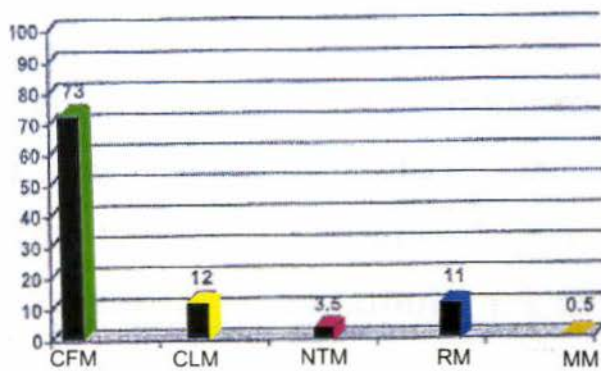
There are other foreign church influences that were introduced before and immediately after independence, most of them coming from the United States of America and other parts of the world. Most of these churches are known as apostolic faith, and also known as born again. In some part of Namibia, the traditional church is still very strong, involving clapping of hands and traditional drums.

1.2 MILITARY MUSIC

The military band consists of three distinct groups in Namibia namely: the army, the police and the navy bands. The first is attached to the state house and contribute to functions organized by the head of the state and other official ceremonies. The second takes part in functions of the police force and public activities when they are invited to contribute. The third has almost the same duties like those of the police band.

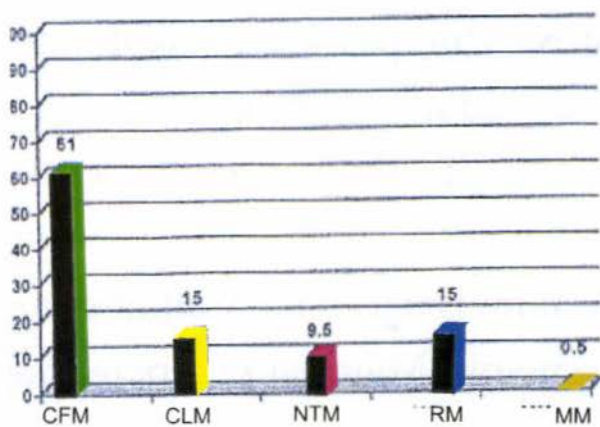


1990 - 1992



1993 - 1995

- Contemporary Foreign Music
- Contemporary Local Music
- Namibian Traditional Music
- Religious Music
- Military Music



1996 - 1998

1.3 MUSIC IN URBAN AND RURAL AREAS

Music is a source of live Constantin Brailoiu (1967-p6) its absence in the society makes it to be inactive, doom and lack of expression. In Namibia, traditional music is most found in the villages and less practiced and enjoyed in urban areas. Local and foreign contemporary music in its multiple forms is notorious in all the corners of the country. Traditional music in rural areas contributes to diverse functions linked to rituals at birth, death, marriage, healings, before and after hunting and fishing, circumcision, social evenings, stories telling, cattle exhibition naming of places, animals and babies, including many other activities. Music in rural areas is the reflection of all aspects of life of the people where it is created, performed and even dies, contrary to the contemporary music in the urban areas which only cater for entertainment in clubs, bars, functions, shops and hotels.

1.3.1 CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

Because of its isolation in the past with the rest of the world, Namibia under the South Africa rule, has known only the music from that country. The censorship enforced at the time did not favor the hatching and blooming of the local music and dance. The music from other African countries, especially from the central, Eastern and Western Africa was linked with the word terrorism in Namibia. All those who listened to this music were called terrorists. This music was considered to be dangerous for Namibians to be exposed to, especially when the masters of the time could not understand the message in the songs. The American and British music was well established without any difficulty. That is why many artists from these two countries are well known in Namibia. Nineteen years after independence, Namibian artists did not come up with tangible Namibian contemporary music. They keep on being influenced most by the artists from the countries above mentioned and South Africa. Some attempts on the Namibian contemporary music creation took place before and after independence, but because of lack of support, those who were involved got discouraged.

After independence, a lot of new genres of music have penetrated the Namibian arena. Although jazz and blues were known in the country, only after independence few groups were created to satisfy Namibian and foreigners who missed the genre.

The reggae: This music which is a Jamaican influence popularized in South Africa became a tool of resistance against apartheid regime in that country. This influence was also accepted with vigour in Namibia facing the same political situation. After independence with the arrival of Namibian people from exile, influenced by Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, and others, many bands in this genre were created and still exist up to now.

Rumba music came to be known after independence. It originated from the central part of Africa, mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo Brazzaville. This music became popular with its versions like Kwasa kwasa, Soukous and Ndombolo ya solo. The music was brought in by the returnees who lived in countries where it originated from and from countries which adopted it as part of their culture. The genre is also known as African people's music, its utilization during black people functions is crucial and its absence is notably and regrettable.

Kizomba:

Known as zook in the Caribbean, kizomba came into Namibia through Angola where the music is considered to be part of their national heritage.

The Namibian people are fond of the South Africa music creation, over the year up now. Thus, mu-

sic like bakanga, panchula and kwaito now, are enjoyable influences in Namibia. They also enjoy the majority of the American music, including rape, hipo and R&B. Music from Zimbabwe and West Africa is equally appreciated.

1.3.2 TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

The really recognition of the Namibian traditional music and dance started after independence, with the burning desire for reconstruction of the National cultural heritage, of which traditional music and dance are important components. Still a lot should be done in order to wipe from the mind of certain people the idea that the culture of the country is inferior to others, especially young Namibians who believe in the supremacy of the South African and American culture.

1.3.3 THE PROMOTION OF MUSIC AND DANCE IN NAMIBIA

The focus on both traditional, contemporary music and dance has really commenced after independence, in terms of promotion. The Namibian autochthonous music is only manifested in traditional music, sporadically seen or listened on radio and television. The so-called contemporary music in the country is based on outside influences, most from South Africa to which Namibia has been part of, and America. Today the need to build a National cultural identity and promotion has began and seen as very essential.

The word promotion in this book will include a variety of important activities that have taken place or are taking place in the country.

Festivals and competitions: (Traditional music)

The Namibian Government has embark upon a programme of the revaluation of cultural identity. Thus, a National festival on culture is organized every year. The venue of this festival is not permanent. It is organized in different regions in accordance with the decision of the National committee. Before the National festival, similar festivals are organized in each region of the Republic, to select their best groups to participate in the national festival. Prizes are won during both regional and national festivals, depending on the resources available from the government and the contribution of the private sector and various organizations. Some traditional groups have travelled abroad trough this programme to countries that have cultural exchange agreement with Namibia.

What matters most according to the Ministry concerned, is not the various prizes won by the groups participating in the festivals, fulfilling the criteria set up by the team of judges, but rather to recognize the interest of the revaluation and practice of what we inherited from the ancestors which gives joy to identify the nation as Namibia.

Music makers competition:

This competition started immediately after independence, with local contemporary bands and solo artists. As from 1996 it started accommodating more categories, including traditional groups. The festival used to be organized by the music section of the Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC).

Prizes won during this competition, where sponsored by the corporation itself, the Government, the private sector, Embassies, local and international organizations. The competition was a very profitable one for young Namibians who wanted to be known and start their career as artists. Some groups and solo artists travelled abroad through this competition to participate in other international music forums.

Sanlam music awards:

This award regroups different contemporary music groups and solo artists in various categories, to show case their talent and win prizes, at the same time a way to popularize themselves and start a professional career.

Ordinary festivals:

These are other sporadic festivals, organized for no other motivation than that of lucrative purpose. There are individuals and private companies which organize music performances in a form of shows or festivals. Selected bands are remunerated in accordance with the contract signed before the job done. This type of contract is the easiest one, because it does not necessitate a core of criteria. The bands participate at the discretion, satisfaction and choice of the organizer.

NASCAM:

The Namibian society of composers and authors of music was created on the initiative of the Ministry of information, which recognized a lack of proper structure for the remuneration of artists who's music has been used by radios, television and private companies. Actually all the local who have published their work, receive money as copyrights, including foreign artists for their intellectual creation, through NASCAM. This organization has qualified personnel that monitor the use of music by radios and television through a specific system in place.

Radios and television:

Namibia has only one National and one private television. As for radios, the country is structured in such way that each language group in the country has got its radio. The National radio broadcasts its programmes in English, the official language of the country.

The local music in diversity was sporadically used after independence, but now that the industry is growing, we started hearing and viewing music on radios and television. The promotion of music started on television in programmes like: Penduka, Kalanami, and Teleza. These programmes are no longer in use but Afro connection and Tataleni are now programmes that connected to music and other forms of arts in the country at NBC. Namibian artists are also promoted on various programmes on One Africa television channel in Namibia.

Publication:

Namibian artists do not have access to proper facilities of music production and publishers are difficult to find in the country. Therefore little percentage of local artists has published, due to the lack of proper publishing companies.

Trade and tours:

The fact that the industry is still crawling, the commercialization of local products just started. The Namibian people started having confidence in their local artists. In the past they could only buy foreign music. The established music shops in country could not stock local products, considered to be primitive, non-polished and lack of value. Nowadays these shops are making good money out of local music and do not miss the opportunity when the offer comes their way. The same attitude was also entertained by the music clubs where the Namibian music was scarce to be heard and danced. Contemporary bands are now performing everywhere in the country. Few bands and solo artists have travelled abroad for commercial performances simply because the country is not yet connected to the music world business companies, as it is happening in other African countries.

Institutions of learning music and dance:

There are two National institutions of learning music and dance in Namibia, namely: The College of the arts and the University of Namibia. They may be some private schools, but with insignificant

number of learners, comparatively to the two institutions mentioned above. The students registered at these two institutions can use the knowledge as a career or personal and family enjoyment after completion of studies.

The Namibian Government's vision on culture:

The following notes are based on the speech delivered by Doctor HN Diaz, Director of arts and culture in the Ministry in charge of culture during the Ondangwa West Regional Arts and Culture Festival on October 3, 1998.

A nation's identity is rooted in its people and culture. Recognition is therefore given to this by the constitution. Namibia's heritage ranges from fossils and early hominid sites to built the environment, artefacts, rockarts and the evidence of conflict and suppression. It is important to note and accept that conflict and suppression were at the order of the day during colonial era, and the disappearance of such forms of evils from the map of Namibia is a major achievement of the present government. The recognition of the wide ranging heritage in Namibia by the present government constitutes the acknowledgement of the contribution of individual communities and as such be used to promote reconciliation in our beautiful country. Of particular important is that the present government has given high recognition to the heritage of the disadvantaged communities in order that their sense of human dignity be restored.

The present Government recognized that the promotion of heritage values and cultural awareness is fundamental and requires a special knowledge concerning the culture of the majority in Namibia as well as a special educational initiative. The present Government, unlike the Government during the colonial era, has the valid philosophy that a nation is one that shares a common heritage. The directorate in charge of culture was given a task first to discover and acknowledge the value and diversities of the Namibian heritage and take steps to safeguard this non-renewable resource for present and future generations. The cultural values of the majority communities which were previously excluded are now being promoted. Platform has been created for cultural revival and promotion to enhance unity and national awareness within the various communities in Namibia. It is important to note that a nation without own culture is like a dead nation without identity. It is the Namibian culture that makes its people to be what it is, not other people. The Namibian diversity of culture is the Namibian people's identity and pride.

To be able to plan an effective direction for the future, people should first know where they came from, what were their strengths and their weaknesses. The Namibian people must first try by all means to discover the diversity of cultures in order to select from the elements only those which are still compatible within the new national shared vision of one Namibia one nation, reconciliation, justice, fairness, peace and hardworking.

CHAPTER TWO

2. RITUAL MUSIC

By ritual music, we mean the music performed during the rituals. Both music and the ritual itself are associated and complement each other to achieving the expected results of that particular ritual. Generally the music in this case carries the names of the ritual.

2.1. DEFINITION AND DESCRIPTION OF OCCASIONS

2.1.1 Aawambo people

The Aawambo are a group of people found in the central North of Namibia. The group represents 51% of the total population of Namibia. This figure is based on the results of the population and housing census of 1994.

Efundula or Ehango (traditional marriage)

The Aawambo is a group of people found in the central North of Namibia. The group represents 51% of the total population of Namibia, this is based on the results of the population and housing census of 1994. The Aawambo people form various little groups within themselves and communicate without easily without any translations.

Parents of the girls have the decision on the marriage of their daughter after they have met the parents of their son-in-law some days before the wedding ceremony. After that a messenger is sent to inform Omuputuli, the person in charge of the venue where all the girls who have reached the age of been married are regrouped for the session, to be informed in order to list the particular girl. For the girls who is not yet proposed, this is the occasion for her to be chosen for proper marriage after this one. Both families of the couple will now be prepared to have enough food for marriage ceremony that takes place at the girl's parent or any other member of the family. Some months before the wedding day, the girl to be married should have different look, to be identified as someone to be married soon. Eembaba (pearls) and Oshikwanga are additional to the hairstyle known as Elende. During this period the parents of the girl to be married are called Ovafukiki.

Efundula ceremony is always organized during summer time, after the harvest period. This preparatory period taking place at a place called Meumbo lomunyeumbo, assembles a total of about 20 to 30 girls ready for marriage. The coordinator of this event is known as Ondudu, he is remunerated by giving him pearl of value, known as Ekoti, Eminimini, Omushambe and full leg of cattle. Each concerned family offers the same thing.

The day of retreat to the venue for preparation, the girls should wear Omangola (hearings) and Okanyokwena on the wrists, including Oivela on the legs (pearls). They all wear skirt called Ongwo yomakupa on which a piece of material called Ondjeva is added, sustained by a belt known as Omiya. This belt soaked in a red powder called Oshikwangha or Olukula, this powder is also applied on the body. At this stage of preparation, all wearable outfit are provided by the parents of the girls and their in-laws for those who are engaged.

The day of retreat is called Efiku lokaombexuxwa, the girls come accompanied by their parents, relatives and friends. At the arrival to the venue, the master of ceremonies ondudu has made fire outside the house to accommodate the girls. Dance and singing take place accompanied by traditional drums called Ngoma. Late in the evening they are told to slip, all in the room known as Ondjuwo yalombe. Girls are also assisted in all their endeavours by an old lady called Meekulu or

EFUNDULA

1st Drum 

2nd Drum 

3rd Drum 

UUDHANO

Clapping of hands
and stamping of feet



Singing part



On-gu-la ya-nienga om-polo

Kulu who from time to time strikes pieces of irons to motivate them during dancing sessions.

The second day, early in the morning the girls are told to wake-up by a specific music pattern of the drums or a sound of a traditional flute played by Onganga, a traditional healer or protector, standing at the door with the legs wide opened for the girls to pass through on their knees. Immediately a special herbal tea is given to them while resting. After sometimes, their mothers should apply special oil on the girls, before the dancing session starts, initiated by the ondudu. The dancing and application of oil activities are repeated throughout the day, with some pauses in between.

The third day, the dancing session continues during the day and night, oil is still being applied on the bodies of the girls. The selected men and women are part of the dancing and motivate the girls not loose energy during the session.

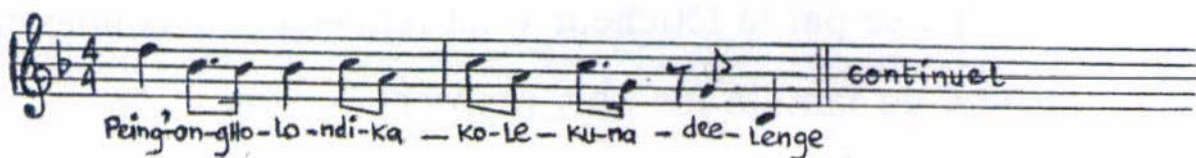
In fact, it is during the third day that the girls are taken to the big gathering constituted by people who came from various villages to witness the event. During this day, the majority of people who came to assist, do not go back to their home, they should be around waiting for the fourth days which is the final day of the ritual.

The fourth day as final day of the occasion, as usual oil extracted form a fat cow, called Madi Engombe is applied on the bodies of the girls to express the beauty of the skin. On the accompaniment of the traditional drums the girls are taken towards the place where animals are kept, final venue of the ritual.

This is time for the girls who were not indentified before efundula to be chosen for the marriage. As they approach the venue, under the rhythm of the drum, the girls wave their heads and men attach pieces of material on the hands of the girls as a proposal for marriage. If the girl removes the piece of material on her hand, that means she is not happy with the proposal and another men will try until she accepts one of them. When they have accepted their husbands, the last trial they go through, is to find out whether these girls had sexual relation before marriage or they may be carrying pregnancy before marriage. This trial consists of crossing a piece of hood placed at the fence. When a girl did not manage to cross that particular hood, the girl is carrying a pregnancy, she becomes a shame for both parents and family, something that will be none in the community and, difficult to be forgotten. Those who have passed this trial, are an admiration and pride for the parents and the community in general. Drinks and food are served to everyone and dance takes place up to late in the evening.

Omakola (traditional healing)

The word omakola in oshikwanyama expresses the name of the traditional healing ritual and the traditional instrument played during the occasion. This instrument is made out of calabashes. This ritual is organized for two different patients. First, for a patient who has been sick for some times, no amelioration after administrating different treatments and cannot move. The second can still move but no improvement. For these types of patients, a traditional healer is invited to remove the bad spirit from the patient. After consultation, blood of animals is given to patients. The fist patient is given the blood of cow and the second, the blood of dog, goat or sheep. Normally the traditional healer is accompanied by a team that assists him in preparing treatment and singing.



The traditional healer should arrive at the venue of the sick person in the afternoon. During his trip his team should sing and play the instrument "omakola" and "Oshashi" that we will study ahead. At the arrival, they are welcomed by the members of the family of the sick person who are aware of his coming. At this point, animals are killed and a circle is drawn around the animals and blood, to protect them against bad spirit which may venture to diminish the power of the blood to be administered to the patient, immediately the treatment starts. During the process of protecting the animals and blood the traditional healer recites some words as follow: Tal' omulele, tal' omututumbowalo, meaning see how animals are ready for action. The blood is applied on the body of the patient by the healer who pronounces the following words: **Na vapitemo, na vapitemo**, meaning the bad spirit in the body of the sick person should leave. When the healer has completed his part, each member of his team should give a bit of the animal's blood to the patient. In evening another session is organized during which the sick person is placed at a place called Oshila shomakola meaning, a place where people in trance communicate with the spirit of the ancestors. At this stage the patient is inside the circle made by the traditional healer and his team, on their knees, assisted by the ekola which is the plural word omakola, the instrument mentioned above.

The singing part involves the relatives of the sick person and other people in the village. The session will continue to the next day early in the morning. At this time the nose of the dog, goat or sheep is cut, attached to a thread and placed on the neck of the patient. In the case of cow, its tail is cut and prepared, placed on neck of the patient. Once again, the action of giving blood to patient is repeated by himself the healer and his team and also some herbs mixed with water kept in calabash. At the end of the treatment, blood is taken from the patient, mixed with food, and is given to a dog. The meaning is that, the sickness has been taken away from the body of the sick person. Usually a party is done at the end of treatment, the traditional healer and his team wishes prompt recovery to the patient and good health to the entire family before they leave.

Epasha (birth of twins)

Epasha in oshikwanyama language refers to the birth of twins. Contrary to other nations in Africa who consider the birth of twins as a blessing, among the Aawambo people the twins are seen as a trouble in the family. When this occurs in the family, the mother of the twins together have to be separated, confined to a place detached from the main house, for a period estimated by onganga (traditional healer), who is called to provide his assistance. During this period of isolation, the mother and the babies should not take bath. Every morning the father of the twins should imitate the sound of a calf to alert the neighbours of the presence of the twins in the family. This exercise is done by the father during the whole period of isolation of his wife and the babies.

Water blessed by the onganga in a basket mixed with some herbs, is placed at the entrance of the house and visitors of the mother and the babies should wash their hands, before going in. On the last day of the isolation, at a place prepared by the onganga, with the water once again prepared by the onganga, the couple and the most immediate member of the family take bath. Some small pieces of a certain plant are given to all the members of the family, including those that are absent should receive, to chew for protection against any misfortune that may be caused by the presence of the twins in the family. Before being reunited as a family in the same house, another treatment based on different herbs is applied to the bodies of the mother and the twins. The payment of the onganga is made by giving salt, traditional pearls, mahangu flour, kitchen utensil and hoe, before they are escorted to the usual main house.

The music as such does not take place but the agitation or the waving of the magic calabash with seeds inside during the treatment, should be considered as instrument, including the yells, and shouts, by the public the last day of treatment and the imitation of a calf by the father every morning.

The first day of taking a normal new born baby outside the house, as first contact with the outside world, causes the organizing of a party among the Aawambo people. Member of the family and friends are invited who sometime can give gifts during the event. This occasion is also symbolized for cutting the hairs of the baby whatever sex. During the same occasion, a belt is attached around the waist of the baby boy and necklace and pearl necklaces on the neck and waist of the baby girls, this is to keep this part parts of the body in a required shape and beauty attraction when they become grow ups. More frequently the dance Uudhano takes place, food and beverages are served.

Eenghali (death, Funeral or mourning)

To explain this event better, first of all the structure of the traditional house of the Aawambo people should be understood well.

What is known and should be understood as traditional house in these area, is the fence surrounding the houses inside of it. The separated houses inside the fence should be considered as rooms FRIEDA WILLIAMS (1994-p. 49). When the person dies in the house, the information is given to people who come after they have heard the family crying, by the position of the fire in the house first. If it is the head of family, the fire is made at the door of his room, if it is the wife the fire at her kitchen, in the case of their children, the fire is at their doors. Naturally the bantu people cry for their lost ones loudly, in such way that neighbours can notice without been informed, they come by themselves to be part of the mourning period by greeting the hard-hit, expressing their solidarity. When the members of the family from far arrive at the venue, usually they come crying at the same time. The song they sing at the arrival is also echo by those who are already at venue. The way of crying and singing is very melancholic called Okangovela ka twina.



The mourning period has different durations, in accordance with who passed away. Normally for the head of the village is two weeks, the head of the family or an adult is four days, for a child is two days. For a new born baby the mourning session is not organized, but should be buried after two days. Wealth and good left by the late person is shared during the last day of mourning period immediately after burial. In the Aawambo tradition, an adult man going for the funeral should carry a bow and some arrows called Eonga nouta. In the absence the bow, the combat stick called Odibo should be the alternative, on which a red powder is applied called Ongwalute. The adult woman carry beverage called Omalodu in her calabash placed in the traditional basket. When they are met in the path or road, they are identified as people going to a funeral. The preceding night before the burial day, announcement is made by coordinator, to inform the audience about the process of the burial and other matters pertaining to the event. After the burial, people who owe the deceased and those owed by the deceased should avail themselves for payment of debt or arrangement with the family. During the mourning session, singing is seen as a way of comforting the family of the deceased, and crying is the way of expressing sorrow. The songs at the venue are part of the traditional mourning songs and religious hymns. The main door of the house left by an adult should change the position after his burial.

Eendima (work)

This expresses the work done when the neighbours are called to assist a person or a family in need, to be helped by doing a job that may be cultivation, to clear a field, harvesting etc.

A their arrival to the venue of work to be done, they are received and welcomed by the coordinator who has been appointed and who knows the type of work they have been called for. During the time the majority is working, a small group of people prepares food and the traditional beverage called Omalodu. People on the field sing and shout while working, to motivate those who manifest weakness or laziness during work and also the expression of self-enjoyment in work. The session may last the whole day or be repeated another day if not finished. The Eendima session can be organized by anyone in the community, who manifests the desire of being assisted in this regard. Songs and the way of shouting alert those who could not be informed to join voluntarily. The message in the songs is based on the work being done or other situations in daily life of the community. At the end of work, food and beverage are served before.

There is another type of work organized in the same way of inviting people to help called Okuxwa. This activity consists of pounding millet called Omahangu. Only women take part in this one, men are excluded. The Uudhano dance and songs take active part during Eendima and Okuxwa.

Oshidano sheengombe (cattle exhibition)

Every year between March and April, a competition of the best cattle is organized in the villages among the Aawambo people. As a custom, big farmers send their cattle far away from the villages, for the purpose of enough supply of water and grazing areas for their animals, taken care by good shepherds. The shepherds are well aware of this competition thus, animals are well fed to enter the competition. After consultation between the farmers led by the chief of the village on the date of the competition, the shepherds are informed. On that day at the arrival to the village, the shepherds sing and dance, each of them thinking to be the best. They are welcomed by the wife of the chief of the village. They all have container of milk, a bow and arrows, the combat stick called Odibo, representing a symbol of courage.

The head of the village, as farmer himself should also welcome the shepherds. This is the moment the names of the best animals are pronounced and praised, because according to the tradition all the animals have names for the identification purpose. The following day in front of the selected animals, the shepherds are praised by the head of the village and the public in general. Everybody gets involved in singing and dancing in Uudhano music. The other farmers men praising their best animals, gives gun shots at the same time singing and dancing. The remuneration of the shepherds is done by giving one animal from the herd he takes care of and food. Food and beverage (Omalodu) are served to everyone present. Songs and dancing become extensive toward the end of the event. The main purpose for the competition of this nature to be done, it gives opportunity to the farmers to know about the health of their animals and also an occasion for the shepherds to explain problems encountered when they are away for solution.

2.1.2 Vakavango people

Situated in the North East of the country, the Vakavango people represent 10% of the total population of Namibia including the following tribes: Vakwangali, Vambukushu, Vagciriku, Vashambu and Vambunza. This percentage is based on the report of the population and housing census of 1994.

Traditional marriage

Kujeka (mbukushu), Nokwara (kwangali), Nkuvara (gciriku), Nkwara (shambyu), Lonkwara (mbunza).

In the Vambukushu tradition, when the boy reaches the age of getting married, his parents have an obligation to identify his future wife. The choice is made among families that are known of good

reputation and hard working people. Traditional pearls are given to the parents of the girl to be married by the parents of the boy after an agreement has been reached. The girl should wear the pearls to identify herself as a chosen one in the society and should no longer be seen for a period of about a month, for better preparation by her parents, anthies or friends, in matters pertaining to the matrimonial union. When the wedding day is fixed, it takes place at the house of the parent of the girl.

After the wedding ceremony, the husband remains at the inlaws house in order to be assisted and monitored in the way the couple will cope in their new endeavour. The couple will leave the house of the parents of the girl when the lobola (amount of money or items paid after marriage) is paid. Songs and dance performed are known as Siperu, Dipera, and Jishongo. Food and beverage are served to the invited guests, friends, and neighbours. After the wedding, the married girl should put a bracelet on arm of her husband as a sign of wishing him good luck and good aptitudes of taking care of the family. The girl at this stage should look well dressed to create the difference between a free girl and the married one.

Traditional Treatment

Mandengure (intense madness)

The traditional healer is invited when the modern treatment did not give good result in the madness sickness. The traditional healer in this case is always accompanied by a team of singers and dancers who perform a repertoire of Njambi (god that has the power to heal the sick) when the treatment is administered. There exists another type of madness called kuhundumuka, which is a light state of madness which does not require the use of songs and dance, when the traditional healer is treating.

Rengo

This ritual is well known in the whole region, linked to the harvest season during which the chief of the Vambukushu people known as Fumu, is expected to test food of the first harvest, before everybody. This is the day his hairs are also cut, as it's done only once a year. This ritual is a manifestation of joy or satisfaction of receiving something to feed themselves, even when the harvest is not abundant.

Food and bevarage are prepared by two groups, one cartering for Fumu and his concellers constituted by old men and women, known as Njami which is plural word of Majami, and the other goup for the invited guests and the community. The ceremony starts with a dance called Sindongo immediately after dinner in evening. After Fumu has fired one gun shot, the drums start playing and the community sings and dances.

This activity will only last for two hours, as an introductory gesture of the ceremony the first day. The following day early in the morning, singing and dancing start again and will take place the whole day with some pauses in between. When food and beverage from the new harvest are being served to the chief and his concil, order is given to everybody to eat after they have finished. Fumu open the dancing floor alone, after thie music number, he leaves the place and will never come back at this venue, during the two days of celebration.

As mentioned above, songs and dance performed during this celebration are part of Siperu, Dipera, and Jishongo dances.


Death


When Fumu is dead, the information is not given until 4'clock early in the morning. His body at this time is kept in canoe, ready to leave for the island known as Sipanana for his burial, to join his pre-


decessors, as a requirement of the tribe. The information of his death is given in parables as follow: Oil in the container is no more as coded words, everybody then understand the meaning. The only person in the family, who should be present at the burial of Fumu, is the grand son or grand daughter who has been prepared for a long time when this event occurs. Nobody cries during mourning period and an absolute silence should be observed. He is burried in a setting position, the mounth opened with a small stick of about 4 to 5 centimetres introduced in his month. He is also burried with his cranium part outside the grave, covered with a piece of wood.

The meaning of the cranium outside justify his assistance to his successor to think wisely for better leadership, the month open is for his successor to always speak to resolve conflits, problems and advice from the leadership to the community, The seating position on the burial justifies the protection of the successor and Vambukushu people in general. The mourning session does not take long for people not to get sick, simply because nobody eats before his burial. This burial is special and does not apply for an ordinary person, during which songs of various natures and crying take place.

Dipera Music


Drum 


Singing part 

Clapping of hands 

Sipelu Music

Percussion with two pieces of wooden blocks

1st Group 

2nd Group 

etc.

Caprivi Region

Situated at the extreme east of Namibia, Caprivi region represents 5% of the total population of the country, including the Lozi, Totela, Few, Mbalangwe, Yei and Subiya tribes .

Marriage

Called Linyalo in lozi, Massesso in subiya, Masseswa in totela, Massesso in few, Massesso in mbalangwe and Marorwa in yei, the marriage like the case of the Vambushu in Kavango region, is organized by the parents for their son, to locate the girl among the families of good reputation.

Parents inform their son after they have identified their daughter in law. In this case the boy has no reason to reject the proposal of the parents. He should strictly obey this commendment as it is required by tradition. When the agreement on marriage has been concluded with the parent of the girl to be married, a date is fixed during which the lobola and other gifts are given. The gifts may be a number of animals that vary from two to twenty, depending on the tribe and area within the region. Money may also substitute animals when they are not available, but very rare that animals are not found, simple because the region is known to be good in the traditional agricultural work, with the fertile land the region possesses. The wedding ceremony takes the whole night with songs and dance. The man will only see his wife the following day, because she is kept hidden. Immediately after they have met, they are taken to the assembly place, where both families and invited guests have been waiting for the couple. At this venue, an arrow and abow is given to the man to demonstrate how he will kill an animal to feed his family and a hoe is given the lady to demonstrate how she will cultivate the land in order to feed her family too. When this demonstration is not done as required, it can be a dishonest and embarrassment for the family. Finally, advice is given to the couple in relation with matters pertaining to the matrimonial union as new endeavour.

Traditional healing

This ritual is named after the traditional healer known as Linaka. It starts with a consultation session like in modern medicine to know what causes the sickness. The traditional healer uses a mirror or a glass of water decorated with beads and pearls, animal horns are also used, hooked on the body of sick person. The traditional applies the incantation for him to be in contact with the spirit that reveals the cause of the sickness, and the treatment is given in relation with the information given by the spirit. Many of these treatments are administered in the night and some of them oblige the use of drums, songs and dance, especially those that kinked to the defeat of bad spirit in possession of the sick person. Some patients may be admitted at the venue of treatment and others may only get treatment and go back to their respective houses.

East, West and Central regions

The Herero which is another bantu group is found in the central and West regions, representing about 8% of the total population in Namibia. The herero was the only nomad bantu group in Namibia, always in search of good grazing areas and good reserves of water for their animals, this in relation with the monopolist policy of the occupant, grabbing all the arable land in the country in conformity with the law of dividing and rule. Finally this group stabilized itself in the areas above mentioned. Divided into different groups, the herero have many chiefs: the group of chief Hoveka in the area of Aminus and Epukiro, the group of Chief Maripewane Maherero in the Otjinene area, the group of chief Omaherero in Okandjatole, the group of chief Perawa in the area of Otjimbingwe, Omaruru and Okakarara. The last battle against the occupant took place with the leadership of Chief Kabandembi Maherero in the area of Okakarara and Otjituo. Some people of this group left for Botswana until now, although some returned to Namibia after independence.

Marriage

Called orukupo in otjherero language, the marriage has two parties involved: on one hand the Ejanda representing the mother side, on the other the Oruzo the father side. In the past, before

marriage an investigation should be conducted within ejanda and oruzo to find out whether people involved in marriage are herero. The tradition does not allow non herero to be part of the family. The milk in the sacred calabash given to the couple during marriage, can be dangerous or fatal for non herero. Also a non herero getting married to a herero lady is seen as divulging the family secrets to strangers. There are three calabashes of milk presented during marriage. The first contains milk for everyone present to be served, the second is reserved for the brave and heroes of the family, and the last one, the most important, reserved for the chief.

When the time comes for the boy to get married, his aunts discuss the matter and inform their brother who is the father of the boy in question, as the tradition does not allow him as the father to be involved in decision making of his son marriage. If the father has little brothers, they are ones to be informed first before himself. Thus, a team is selected to go and negotiated with the parents of the girl identified. These negotiations may sometimes last for a year. When agreed, the selected team from the boy side should offer one adult cattle and three little animals and they should not enter the village, they should stop at about 500m from the house of the parent of the girl to be married. They should wait until 5'clock, appropriate time for offering the animals. When the animals are accepted, they have to come back to the same venue to wait. After sometimes, the team has to go again for further negotiation and agree on aspects pertaining to planning and organization. In the evening a group of ladies from the boy side go and perform in yard of the parents of the girl to be married, at the same time they meet another group of ladies from the girl side and will perform together. Songs performed express the quality and provenance of the animals given as part of the acceptance of marriage, in this these animals are called ovitunja. Songs and dance performed during marriage are called outjina. Christianity is well implemented in Namibia and during an activity of this nature, there is always a repertoire on religious songs that takes place.

In darkness, the future husband should find his way without being seen by anyone to the house of his father in law where he should spend the night without taking his clothes and shoes off. Early in the morning, the husband to be has to go where animals are kept, with a stick he must beat one of the animals and leave the scene. That is an indication that animals should be killed. A unit of three ribs of the left part the animals should be shared among the two families, as a gesture of cementing the matrimonial friendship called okukwazu evango kuyaruka evango. Pieces of cooked meat are offered in both directions after the future husband and wife have blown air from their mouths on it, this act is to continue symbolizing the friendship that should reign between the two families. The future husband and his wife to be do not eat themselves, and this action is called okusuvira orupati. Thus, the marriage is accepted by both parties. The fat extracted from the old cattle is applied on the head of the girl. In the afternoon around 15 hours, women from both side meet for singing outjina songs and dance. It is during this period that the girl, well dressed, move in between the women that are dancing. Food is also served at the same time, and fat is again applied on the head of the girl, this action is called okukatoora orunde. The vertebral column bones of the animal prepared are served to all those who have been dancing to eat. The following day the boy sleeps again in his father-in-law's house. Early in the morning the girl should go and fetch water in the special container that will serve to cook the head of the big animal killed yesterday. When it is cooked, the couple is requested to eat the internal meat of the superior part of the mouth of the animal head. This act is called okumakera oruramua. During the all process of marriage, the boy should demonstrate a high degree of maturity, because a single mistake done may provoke the cancellation of the marriage.

After eating, the boy is called in the house by a group of wise people for the last advice. Finally, the couple is requested to go to the sacred fire where they should drink milk from the sacred calabash of the chief called ehoru. Immediately after this act, the boy leaves the venue accompanied by his wife, thus the marriage has been officialised. In accordance with the herero tradition, he should ar-

rive at his home not before 17 hours, but after the given hour is not a problem. This is the time the sacred fire of the family accepts the new comer home. In evening a small party called ondjova is organized in the family behind the main house, to eat goat meat, this meat is only eaten by people who are married. Bachelors and those who have divorced or lost their partners are not invited. They can be a source of bad luck or unfortunate situation to newly married couple. This is the first night that the boy will make love for the first time with his wife, after they have left the venue. But the boy time to time can come back and enjoy with others up to the end of the party.

Celebration and commemoration

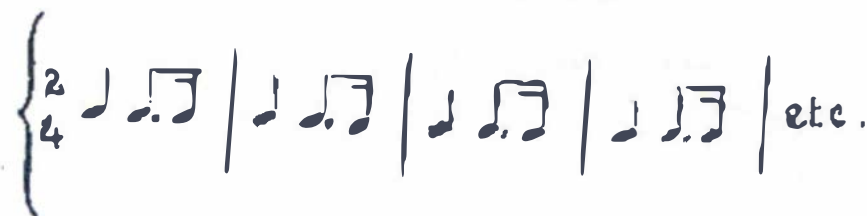
They are called omukandi and omazemburikiro. The herero was one of first tribes that resisted the German penetration in Namibia thus, a huge part of their culture has vanished, because of disruption and unrest caused by the war. Colonialism massacred the tribe and it is survived by miracle. The most notorious cultural activities of the tribe are omuhiva, outjina and okunderera.

Omuhiva and Outjina are the two predominant dances that are performed during marriage and recreative activities. Omuhiva is danced by men and outjina by women. The difference between the two is seen only on voices. Men use lower timbres that may be written on lower register, and ladies in high register. A diversity of sentiments is expressed through the two music forms, most the history of the tribe and the kingdom of cattle as they strongly believe in farming.

Okunderera is a military march that symbolises the resistance against colonialism and takes place during commemorations, the most common one is done on the 26th of August which is the national day of Namibia. The herero link this day to chief Maharero, and visit his tomb at Okahandja 70 km north of Windhoek capital of the country. During this day, the herero men are in the old german military outfit, and women in the old german dressess. At the tomb, on their knees, they inform the spirit of the chief about problem encountered by the tribe, and make wishes and resolutions to be achieved during the following year.

Music scripts(Outjina)

Clapping of hands



East of the Republic

In this landscape resides a tribe called Tswana. Before independence of Namibia its people were under the jurisdiction of the herero. It managed to achieve its detachment after independence and recognized as tribe in Namibia. The Batswana are bantu. They have their roots in the Kurumain in South Africa, in the province of North-West. They represent 0.4% of total population of Namibia (1994 census). The Batswana in Namibia identify themselves as Batlharo and those in Botswana as Barolong or Bangwaketse.

The batswana moved from South Africa to Namibia resulted from the war in the 1800 between them and the English people, willing to sell alcohol to the endogenous in exchange of cattle, which the batswana chief did not authorize. Thus, Morwe second commanded his soldiers to destroy all depots of alcohol in the area. He was arrested by the British authority for the act committed. His son managed to free him by paying fine. As a free man, he rebelled himself against the British author-

ity, and engaged himself in a war which he never won. He exiled to Namibia through the border of South- East.

Marriage

The marriage among the batswana is called enyalo. The girl to be married is identified by the parents of the boy. The identification or the selection is done among families that have good reputation in the area, in terms of behaviours and hard working people. The young man to be married is requested by his parents to choose a girl for marriage, in the indentified family. At this stage, the chosen girl is now being known as segametsi or sego (to be married). For the first meeting, the uncle of the boy is selected to lead the team to meet the parents of the girl. He must be a man with good record of behaviours in the community where he lives. This meeting takes place in the evening arround 2 to 3 O'clock early in the morning, when the parents of the girl to be married are sleeping. When they are asked to know who they are after they have knocked the door, the uncle should mention his name. When asked what he wants late in the evening, he should say we are looking for a lost animal of which we are sure to find in your house. As a tradition, they will know what is it all about. The door is open and the conversation begins.

During this first meeting, to impress the future in-laws, they should offer gifts, that can be animals or working tools. If it is an animal to be offered, preferably it should be a lamb that does not make noise. The goat is indiscreet and brings unfortunat. When agreed on the terms of marriage, then animal should be killed and eaten immediately after the meeting. Sometimes the girl can also be called and be asked if she knows the visitors, if she reponds yes, that is an indication that she has accepted the proposal for marriage.

At the end of the meeting, the date of the next meeting should be agreed upon, for the marriage ceremony. The identified girl should scrupulously avoid sex either with her fiancé or somebody else before marriage. Making love with her fiancé before marriage should result to a fine to be paid to the parents of the girls if they know. The fine is known as go thobela segotlo consists of giving a lamb. To pregnant a girl before marriage is a big offense in the society, in this case the fine varies from one cattle to many especially when the parent of girl do not accept the man for marriage.

During the wedding day, the traditonal brew is prepared in both sides, and everybody meets at the house of the parents of the girl. The parents of the future husband should come with animals in pairs, starting from four to tweety depending on the capacity of families that are envolved. This event can last for a week also depending on families that are envolved. To unite the couple, the two families have to meet at one of the aunt of the girl to be married. This is the time the boy is going to make love with the girls for the first in bed that has been prepared, covered with a white bed-cover that should be viewed at the end of this sexual act, because the public expect this white bed-cover to have spots of blood from the girl, making love for the first time, terminating her virginity. The aunts of the girls, hidden should monitor the groaning or moaning of the girl making love for the first time in her life. At the end of this sexual act, if none of the blood on the bed-cover and pain monitored did not take place, this means that the girl have known men before marriage.

In this case the two families should meet and discuss to find out with who the girl had sex before marriage. In the case if it is the very same boy who marring her, he sould pay a fine. But if it is somebody else, the actual fiancé should withdraw and be reimbursed. The girl and the man who had intercourse with her are punished. When everything has gone without any incident, the girl remains at her parents' home and joins her husband sometimes later, if the man did not build his house, then this is the time he must make sure that he has one on his own. This period also serves to prepare the girl to be aware of some problems that may occur in the family and how to handle or deal with them when they come. The day she is joining her husband, the two families meet again, and this meeting is called Go laya. Here again counselling take place before her departure. She is

accompanied by her parents with a lot of gifts, among these gifts there should be a broom called Lefelo and a big cup in ceramic called Sego. The broom symbolizes a readiness of cleaning up dirt in the house including bad problems, the ceramic cup is a sign of giving cold water to her husband to cool down after or during work, or when necessary. When the time of labour comes she must be rushed to her parents' home where she should deliver a child for the first time. If this is done in the hospital, first she goes to her parents' home before reuniting with her husband.

In the case of not having a child after some time, a request is made to the husband to leave the house for sometimes, for the brother to have sexual intercourse with his wife. If the lady becomes pregnant this is an indication that the husband has a problem and they will have the only child during their marriage. If the lady does not get pregnant after various traditional treatments, she will go back to her parents' home, and goods given to the parents during marriage are reimbursed or she is substituted by her sister in marriage.

Tradition demands that before the wedding, a traditional healer should be contacted to protect and bless the venue of the wedding one day before it takes place. During the whole process of the ceremony that day, traditional music is performed and a beverage called Bojalwo is also served through out.

Traditional healing

The traditional healer is called Ngaka and the treatment itself Bongaka. The ngaka is consulted when somebody is sick or when a problem arises in the family. Consultation by the traditional healer is done first by contacting his or her ancestors, making use of five bones of animal cut in small pieces, all the times thrown on a piece of dried animal skin, each piece has got a name and in accordance with the final position on the piece of the skin, they reveal a message to traditional healer. These pieces of bone are kept in a small container, which is given to the consultant to speak to the pieces of bone in the container, before they are thrown on the skin by the ngaka, to reveal the message or the cause of the problem. Depending on the message received, the treatment varies. Some patients are given herbal treatment others the treatment is administered in a form of massage to free the sick person from intense pain and bewitchment if any. The traditional healers are also consulted to purify the entire village from bad spirits. They are considered as important people in the society for the role or endeavour of being a saviour or protector. In this community, songs as such do not take place during traditional healing.

Death

The Batswana call death Loso. A dead person is buried the same day before night. The corpse is covered with the animal skin, the animal killed for the people who are mourning. He or she should be buried in sitting position, facing the east. When God calls the dead people, they will rise immediately because they face the east where the sun, symbol of life comes from. Singing mixed with cry is observed through out. The head of family is buried in the middle of the main part of the house, his wife in the middle of the kraal of animals, and the son or daughter in the yard called Segotlo. The open grave is guarded by the spiritual people before the burial. This is to prevent bad spirits not to enter the body of deceased person before the burial.

The Center and Southern part of the country

With the new demarcation, the Nama and Damara found themselves in different regions in the country namely, Otjozondjupa in the center of the country, Hardap and Karas in the south. These two tribes are known to be non-bantu, Damara and Nama have little differences of words and pronunciations but they are seen to be the same language in Namibia, but different from the other

ethnic groupings in the country as Bantu. The Damara are black and Nama have a light complexion skin that approximates them to the coloured community found in the country. The Nama have their eyes deep-set and strong hair giving the impression of not growing. Their origin is not well defined in Southern Africa but the most accurate one is that they moved from South Africa and represent a total number of 13% of global population of Namibia.

Marriage

Called !Gamed, the traditional wedding is the most well known ritual by the community. The intention of taking an identified girl in marriage should first be notified to the parents of the girl by the parents of the man. These negotiations may last sometimes up to fourteen days, during which all aspects of a decent wedding are discussed, this during the night. For each day of the meetings, the family of the man to be married should always come with firewood, sugar, milk, and tea or coffee. During these two weeks of negotiations, the girl to be married should not be seen by people who are not part of her family. She must be prepared to look good during marriage. On the fourteen day when negotiations are finished, if agreed, a party is organized during which the man to be married will engage her fiancée by inserting a ring on her finger, symbol of identification for marriage. This is not the real marriage as the boy has now to be preparing for the final one, by buying new clothes for himself and his future wife, food and the animal to be given to the parents of the girl that day, should also be bought. Old animals are not accepted because they are not good for procreation in farming.

On the day of the real marriage, all these gifts should be given before the endorsement of marriage. It is only after this gesture that the festivity will commence. In the Damara-Nama tradition, both families should exchange food during the party, as animals have been killed in both families. The main act performed by the man to be married, is that he must kill the cow to be prepared by his in-laws. This animal is special in the process of the wedding. It is kept live in a kraal of about fifty square metres. A long knife is given to him, and he should go inside the kraal, kill the animal with one touch only. To fail during this trial is a disgrace for his parents who have trained him for the occasion. It is a symbol of courage demonstrating how strong he is, and capable of defending his family in times of danger. That day, until the time he did it right, the heart of the father will never have peace because this performance, represents the dignity of the parents' pride to their in-laws. After he has killed the animal, he must run and hide himself in one of the houses around because the tradition demands that he should be beaten by men present, as an act of jealousy of having succeeded to have the girl.

After he has been congratulated by his father and father-in-law, the animal can be cut into pieces, the part that links the real part of the animal and its backbone should be taken care of. This part of bone should only be prepared by the mother of the girl getting married. The meat in that part of the bone must only be eaten by the mother herself, together with about ten to fifteen old ladies. The remaining bone should be kept and be taken care of, for about six months without being dismantled before it is thrown away in the forest. The meaning of taking care of bone is that during the ceremony, if the bone is dismantled, she will have no children in her marriage. The girl that has been internee can be seen now, celebrating together with family members and guests. At this stage she looks beautiful and her skin has changed to light complexion. Two days later before the departure of the girl to her new home, the two families meet again, it is during this occasion that the parents of the married man, demand the permission of leaving the village with their daughter-in-law. The girl will leave accompanied by her small sister or brother, to assist her daily endeavours as a household. The small white flag on top of the roof of houses of the two families, expresses the sign of marriage that has taken place.

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Music is observed throughout this occasion up to its end. Two genres of music take place during this event namely: Lang-arm and Nama stap or Damara /gais. After the traditional wedding, sometimes the couple is advised to remarry in church for more benedictions. At this occasion, often wind instruments band also perform as a tradition, that is why the use of wind instruments in the south of the country is very popular.

Music transcription: Frikkie Strydom
 Text translation: Pieter Roos

Tempo:  = 152 M.M.



'K'Gaan na die boe-re-pleas

Namibia !gAiro
 A Nama Action Song

Transcribed: Wilma Lohmberg
 Submitter: Member of CPK de Vries Secondary School 31/7/98



Na - mi - !gAiro - ro. Na - mi - !gAiro - ro. Na - mi - !gAiro - ro. Na - mi - !gAiro - ro.

CHAPTER THREE