

# **PROFILE OF CHEKE CHA MBUNDA CULTURAL AND WRITERS ASSOCIATION**

## **“Cheke” means “Glowing Light Out of Darkness”**

The Association was borne out of attempts by some concerned Mbunda Speaking people in the 1940s along the line of rail. It formally existed in 1956 as Mwondo under the Chairmanship of Mr. Kalimbwe. Later in the 1960s it was changed to be Mbunda Cultural Writers' Association. It started to produce a magazine called “Kapila kamuthzimba Tako”. In 1981 on 27<sup>th</sup> September the Association was renamed “Mbanja” this was at a meeting that took place in Monze. Later in the same year on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> October, at a meeting that took place at the late Mr. Gabriel Mulyata's house here in Lusaka the Association yet again was renamed “Cheke Cultural Writers' Association”. The same was officially registered in 1982. It started to produce a magazine called “Likalavandhtzi Iya Mufuko”.

On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2007 at a Meeting that took place at the House of Dr. Rosemary Ndonyo, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ndandula Libingi, the Association yet again changed its name from Cheke Cultural Writers' Association to almost what it was in the 60s to 80s, Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association. The effecting of these changes with the Registrar of Societies was done on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2008 and a new certificate issued. This change was necessitated by shift in the Association's vision from just writing about the history to also revive, preserve, promote and protect the Culture and affairs of all the nine chiefs of the seven dialects of the Mbunda Speaking People Group. This entails organising and holding cultural gatherings, to this end execute programmes relating to “Official Representation and Custodian of traditional music, makithi, oracles, myths, oral and written records of the Mbunda People Group.

Over the years the Association has progressed though slowly but surely and has managed to achieve the following;

- 1) Produced its first ever History book of the Mbunda Speaking Peoples in 1994 in English.
- 2) The book was translated in Mbunda Language and was published in August 1998. It was launched in Kaoma in October 2000 at a function named “The Launch of the History Book and Mbunda Arts and Cultural Exhibition”.
- 3) In 1997, the Association was invited by the Mbundas in Angola to assist in bringing back the Mbunda Kingdom and Culture that remained in Zambia after the demise of Mwene Kazungo Shanda in 1974 in Lyondondo village of Kalabo District. The Association responded by effectively and actively organising all the cultural necessities to the reestablishment of the Mbunda Kingdom in Angola and coronation of His Majesty King Mbandu III. A request was made to the Angolan Government to help in facilitating the logistics of moving the King Designate, his family and Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural dance troupe to Angola. A budget of US \$ 20,000.00 was approved to facilitate movement by Air and Road to Angola.

On 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008, the Association accomplished the assignment of being part to the Re-establishment of the Mbunda Kingdom in Angola and coronation of His Majesty King Mbandu III at Lumbala Ngimbu, Moxico Province.

- 4) On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2007, the Association wrote a letter to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, protesting and challenging the Ministry, Likumbi Lya Mize Cultural Association and UNESCO about the ill prepared Candidature File on the Proclamation of Makishi as World Intangible Heritage and the Action Plan for Safeguarding of Makishi Masquerade in Zambia. In these two documents, it implied that “Mukanda is a ritual practiced by Vaka Chinyama Cha Mukwamayi Communities, including the Mbunda, Chokwe, Luchazi and Luvale who live in North Western and Western Provinces of Zambia”. It was emphasized that Vaka Chinyama Cha Mukwamayi is a Luvale Chieftainship and is not inclusive of Mbundas. Mbunda Speaking People are distinct tribal group with its own Chiefs. Though they share similar culture of Mukanda and Makishi masks with the other three tribes, each has its own Makishi artifacts but do not have restrictions in use among each other.

After protracted meetings among stakeholders (Luvaless, Chokwes, Luchazis and Mbundas), the Ministry and UNESCO in Lusaka, “The Action plan for Safeguarding of the Makishi Masquerade in Zambia” document was amended in June 2008 to correct the anomaly.

- 5) Was involved in translation and printing of the Mbunda Bible, a project the Association has been proud to support vigorously. Translation of Mbunda Bible was started in 1914 in Angola, but was disrupted by the Mbunda/ Portuguese war, after the later abducted the Mbundas King, His Majesty King Mbandu, killed him and dislodged the Mbunda Kingdom. In 1956 the work was continued in Zambia but under many challenges which almost saw the work abandoned. In 1986 the Association revived the translation of the Mbunda Bible.

The Bible Society's policy is that the benefiting Community of any Bible Project should contribute some percentage towards the printing of their Bible once the translation has been completed. The amount that needed to be contributed by the Mbunda Community was about K50million to K60 million. Contributions were to be sent to the Bible Society of Zambia under "Mbunda Bible Printing Project", either directly or through Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural & Writers Association branches or the National Office. The Association organised fundraising ventures and well wishers committed their finances to this noble cause. The Mbunda Bible was finally printed in the year 2006 and delivered to Zambia in 2008.

On 9<sup>th</sup> August 2008 the Mbunda Bible was launched in Kaoma, and introduced in Angola on 17<sup>th</sup> August 2008 at the re-establishment of the Mbunda Kingdom and coronation of His Majesty King Mbandu III at Lumbala Ngimbu, Moxico Province. On 31<sup>st</sup> January 2009 the Mbunda Bible was re-launched in Lusaka. What a pleasant moment it was for the Association, and what a coincident. The Mbunda Bible Translation work was interrupted in Angola in 1914 when the Portuguese abducted His Majesty King Mbandu and eventually killed him and dislodging the Mbunda Kingdom. Ninety four years later the Mbunda Kingdom is re-established in Angola with the coronation of His Majesty King Mbandu III on 16<sup>th</sup> August 2008, and the Mbunda Bible translation work is completed and launched in the same month.

- 6) In April 2009 the Association built their own website: [www.chekechambunda.org](http://www.chekechambunda.org), to help disseminate their activities locally and internationally.

The Association's Vision now is to embark on other projects of:

- 1) Producing a Mbunda Dictionary
- 2) Translating and printing of the Mbunda History Book in Portuguese, with translation already started in Angola.
- 3) Printing the Mbunda Encyclopaedia (Chishete) in Mbunda.
- 4) Reprinting of the History Book both in English and Mbunda.
- 5) Segmentation of the History Book both in English and Mbunda into small booklets and Brochures based on historical titles like Kolongongo War, Mulambwa's Lozi-Mbunda Agreement and Mbunda Chokwe War, for easy dissemination to Mbunda Speaking People and the public in general.
- 6) Safeguarding of Makithi Masquerade in Zambia Project, sponsored by UNESCO and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services as the Contactor.
- 7) Organising of the Annual Celebrations by three specified Chiefs of the Mbunda Speaking People on the National Annual Traditional Ceremonies Calendar namely, Lukwakwa at Senior Chief (Mwene) Sifkufe's Manyinga Palace in Kabompo in October, Mbunda Liyoyelo at Chief (Mwene) Chiyengele's Kayombo Palace in Kabompo and Lyenya at Chief (Mwene) Mundu's Liumba Palace in Kalabo.
- 8) Organise a local Radio Station either in Senanga or Kaoma capable of disseminating Mbunda programmes to all districts where Mbundas live in Western and North-Western Provinces.
- 9) Situation Analysis of Mbunda Speaking People in Zambia
- 10) Bio-Data Directory for all Cheke Cha Mbunda Members and production of Mbunda Profile Booklet.

We now appeal for donations from Mbunda Speaking People and other organisations locally and internationally who are eager to promote these projects and others that may come forward.

The following activities are being undertaken by respective organs of the Association:

- **The Research, Information and Publication Committee** under the Chairmanship of Dr. Rosemary Ndonyo and deputized by Pastor Kennedy Njamba, submitted a project proposal on The Situation Analysis of the Mbunda Ethnic Profile in Zambia to National Executive Committee for approval and subsequently possible sponsors for funding of the chronicling and identification of the Mbunda Speaking Peoples in all Zambia,
- **The Economic, Finance & Fundraising Committee** under the Chairmanship of Miss Claire Limbwambwa and deputized by Mr. Makuwa Kapanda is presently organising a Cultural Extravagaza in Lusaka, showcasing the traditional life of the Mbunda Speaking People and their 44 Masked Makithi to raise funds from International Donors, Tourists, Mbundas and Zambians in general to fulfil the projected programmes of the Association. This will culminate into an annual event.

- **The Cultural and Education Committee** under the Chairmanship of Mr. Chitumbo Musenge has organised a strong Mbunda Cultural Dance Troupe in Lusaka and in full capacity of reviving and preserving all Mbunda Speaking People group traditional activities and their 44 Makithi masquerade.
- **The Legal and Foreign Relations Committee** under the Chairmanship of Mr. Muyenga Akushanga and deputized by Mrs. Nellie Mutti continuously advises the Association on legal issues.
- **The National Executive Committee** under the Chairmanship of Mr. Ndandula Libingi and deputized by Mr. Leornard Mubanga Chuma, has been organising and launching Provincial, District and Branch Committees in Kaoma, Lukulu, Kabompo, Itezhi-tezhi, Livingstone, Mumbwa, Solwezi, Mongu, Senanga and Kalabo where Mbunda Speaking People are found.

We trust that in future we will be able to add to what Cheke Cha Mbunda Cultural and Writers Association intends to do in order to concretising our people and uniting them in order to appreciate what the Mbundas have been able to do and continue to do in adding value to this Country as a people. Therefore Contributions are more than welcome from all the Mbunda speaking peoples and well wishers to contribute to the Association's noble cause.

We also call upon as many Mbundas as possible to share this Information with as many Mbunda Speaking People they may come across as possible.