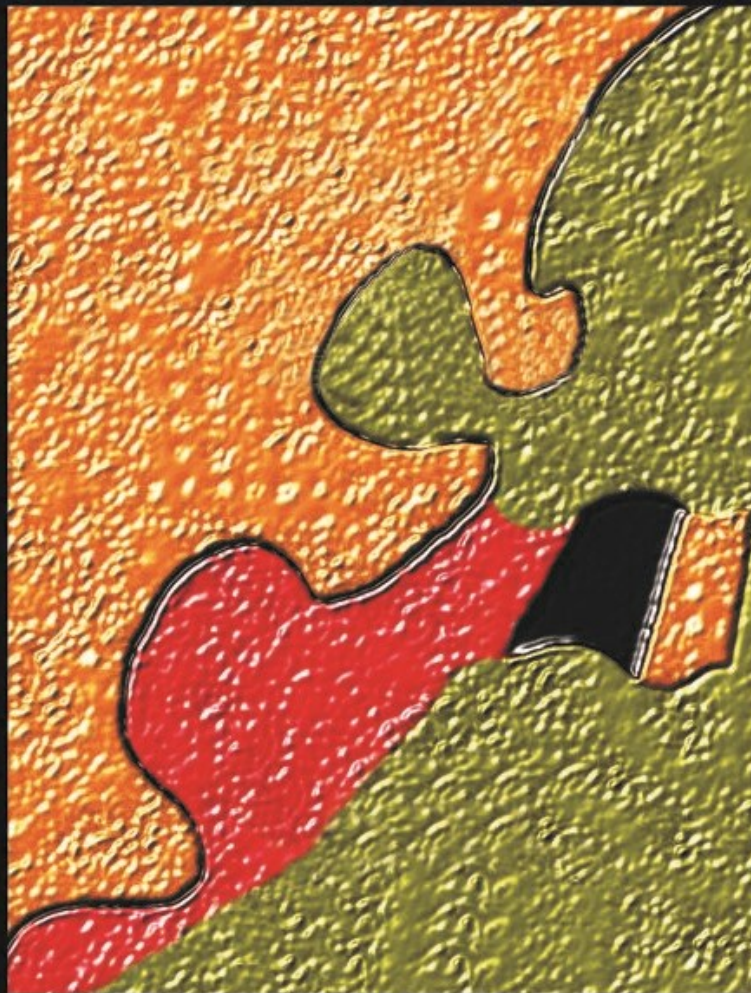


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Edited by : Chanda Penda

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CHAPTER TWO**THE ORIGINS OF ZAMBIAN NAMES¹**

Chanda Penda

As is common in many Bantu societies, Zambia names come from the natural environment, circumstances of birth and the social setting. Names from circumstances of birth include physical appearance, position of birth, place of birth, and so on. Those from the natural environment include names from plants, animals and other natural phenomena. Nevertheless, the broadest category in Zambia nomenclature is the socio-psychological environment. My recent unpublished quantitative analysis of selected publicly available school registers in Kitwe and Lusaka showed that between 2013 and 2017, 71% of the 13 thousand students sampled used foreign first names – the remaining meagre percentage used local language based first names.² This chapter is, however, descriptive rather than structural, of traditional Zambia anthroponyms as they exist at present.

NAMES FROM THE SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL ENVIRONMENT

Munshifikilwa ku bwingi, tapelwe shina (Bemba) – *he who does not mingle with people is not given a name (remains unknown)* – Mulenga Kapwepwe

The socio-psychological environment represents the broadest category of names sources.

THE DRUM

The drum (ngoma), used primarily for communication, is a very sacred part of all traditional Zambia societies. In fact, whoever coined the phrase 'African Rhythm' might have done so in reference to sound produced by this powerful tool. Extending into prehistorical periods, it has been a useful instrument for mass communication as well as a handy tool for ushering one into metaphysical dimensions. John M. Janzen (1992) and, subsequently, Rijk van Dijk, Ria Reis and Marja Spierenburg (2000) used the word *Ngoma* to refer to various aspects of life in Central and Southern Africa, and beyond the continent whose (geographical and cultural) extent have not yet been determined. These included rainmaking rituals, the initiation of the coming of age girls and boys, installation of the chieftaincy, celebrating regional and national political leaders, dancing with masks, and traditional healing rituals, songs, panegyrics, phrases, and so on. Even in the

¹ This chapter has been republished with minor additions.

² In addition, my study of names of 2504 sampled University of Zambia (UNZA) graduates in the recently published directory (2019) listing all graduates from inception to 2016, in fact, shows an increase in the percentage of usage of traditional Zambia first names from only 7% in 1976 to 14% in 1986 and 1996, 35% in 2006 and a drop to 32% in 2016. The lower percentage in the earlier years may be attributed to several interacting factors – among them the negative missionary and colonial attitude toward indigenous culture.

absence of a drum, these practices are referred to as Ngoma as long as they represent transition from one social state to another.³ Additionally, the drum has been identified as a crucial source of feminine power in society.⁴

In Turner's (1967; Harrison, 1903) worldwide categorization of *sacra* (sacred objects and practices) among religions, drums and other musical instruments fell in the foremost category, while masks, mirrors and *mbusa* (pottery emblems) fell in a lesser group.⁵ Ngulube (1989) recognized medicinemen, carvers, drummers and those with wisdom to settle disputes as being among powerful people in traditional Zambian society.⁶ Naming rituals in some Zambian communities can also be categorized within the Ngoma practice. It is consideration of these factors that might render personal names that refer to the drum to be placed at the apex of the power hierarchy – in short; they are stars among fellow names.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Hangoma	'drummer'; one fond of making drums	Tonga
Kamangu	a kind of drum	Bemba, Kunda
Kamungoma	'one associated with drum rituals' i.e. one born with the help of medicine	Lozi
Kaoma	'a small drum'	Bemba
Mondo	'a talking drum'	Bemba
Mwondo	a kind of drum	Lunda
Ngoma	'drum'	Bemba, Chewa

COLOUR AS A SYMBOL

The three basic colours are not green, blue and red! Whether identifiable in a kanga or a single-coloured coat, nature, national flags, animal hide, birds' feathers, complexion of a person or other inanimate objects, colour symbolism is an invincible part of any society. Victor Turner identified the red-white-black triad as the three basic colours used in Ndembu ritual. These colours were identified from a wide range of sources including "trees with red or white gum, white kaolin clay or red oxidized earth, black alluvial mud, charcoal, the white sun and moon, the black night, the redness of blood, the whiteness of milk, and the dark colour of feces." This triad further included the appearance of human beings due to skin pigmentation, animals and birds due to the hues of their feathers or hides. These colours, as many other symbols, are merely a sensory pole; there exists an ideological pole for each of the colours which individually represent varied concepts. Albinos, for example, are said to have the whiteness of ancestral spirits.⁷

³ John M. Janzen, *Ngoma, Discourses of Healing in Central and Southern Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 178; Rijk van Dijk, Ria Reis, and Marja Spierenburg, "Introduction. Beyond the Confinement of Affliction: A Discursive Experience," in *The Quest for Fruition through Ngoma: Political Aspects of Healing in Southern Africa* (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2000), 4–10.

⁴ Annette Drews, "Gender and Ngoma: The Power of Drums in Eastern Zambia," in *The Quest for Fruition through Ngoma: Political Aspects of Healing in Southern Africa*, ed. Rijk van Dijk, Ria Reis, and Marja Spierenburg (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2000), 43.; Maliya Mzyece-Sililo. Writers' Circle Monthly Gathering, 2011

⁵ Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), 102; Jane E. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 144–60.

⁶ Naboth MJ Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia* (Nalinga Consultancy/Sol-Consult A/S Limited, 1989), 67.

⁷ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 28; Turner, 68–69; Turner, 77.

Mpemba (white kaolin) or the colour white, on the ideological pole, represents ‘goodness’, ‘health’, ‘ritual purity’, ‘freedom from misfortune’, ‘political authority’, and ‘assembling with the spirits’. Grey may also represent white. Red represents ‘menstrual blood’, ‘blood of birth’, ‘blood of animals’, ‘red meat of game’, ‘inheritance of hunting powers’, ‘unity of all initiated hunters’, ‘hunters’ power to kill’, ‘blood of homicide’, ‘blood of circumcised boys’ and the ‘blood of witches’ victims which is exposed in necrophagus feasts’. Yellow or orange can also be categorized as red. Black represents death, misfortune or sterility (impotence or barrenness). The colour blue or other dark colours can be categorized with black. White kaolin is used to mark the corpse of a father or mother as a way of inviting their spirit to participate in future rites of naming their descendants, while the corpse of a sterile person is marked using charcoal to completely cut them from the land of the living. The classification by colour precedes clan or any other social categorization.⁸ That the white-red-black triad is characteristic of the traditions of all major Zambian traditional groupings, as can be observed in personal names, dress and sacred objects can be an indication of oneness on the ideological bedrock of Zambia.

Malimba ‘colours’ (Lozi)

pr. Malimba ali ban di naali ba ngombe, mbumu katibi mubika

lit. The (bright) colours on (carp) fish had they been on the cow, the king wouldn’t give it to a slave

int. *The beauty of various species of carp makes it look like an exclusively royal property*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Ailoola	‘dark one’	Lozi
Bufuku	‘night, darkness’	Kaonde
Chikanga	‘guinea fowl’ i.e. black and white	Luvale
Kasuba	‘the sun’	Bemba, Lamba
Makala	‘charcoal’	Lunda
Malasa	‘charcoal’	Luvale
Malwa	‘misfortune’ i.e. black	Lunda
Matoka	‘white’ i.e. purity	Lunda
Mpemba	‘white kaolin’	Bemba, Lunda, Mambwe
Mukumbi	‘red wing feather worn by a dancer of <i>The War Dance</i> ’	Lunda
Mulopa	‘blood’	Bemba
Munyama	‘blue or black cloth’	Bemba
Musanya	the sun, sun deity	Mambwe, Namwanga
Mwiloola	‘dark one’	Lozi
Namangolwa	born in the evening’	Lozi
Ng’andu	‘crocodile’ (same as black clour)	Bemba, Lozi, Luvale, Tonga
Nkhama	‘red ochre’	Tumbuka
Nkundwe	‘red dust’	Kaonde
Nondo	‘cormorant’, a water fowl (black)	Bemba

⁸ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 41–42; Turner, 57; Turner, 66; Turner, 90; Turner, 291.

Simpemba (feminine: Nampemba) 'white kaolin'

Mambwe, Namwagas

CLAN ASSOCIATION

Traditionally, clan association is among the most important social categories. According to Brian Siegel, there are about forty common clans shared among matrilineal groups in south Central Africa⁹ – mostly Zambia. Several clans are found in both matrilineal and patrilineal societies.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Banda	'a priestly clan'	Chewa
Chondoka	an offshoot clan from the Mfunene clan	Tumbuka
Chungu	'snake clan'	Luchazi
Imbwae	'a member of the Mbwa clan'	Lozi
Kaposhi	'tower'	Luchazi, Lunda, Luvala
Mbwa	'dog'	Bemba
Membe	'penis'	Bemba
Muchindu	'hyena'	Tonga
Mudenda	'elephant/bush pig'	Tonga
Mukwanamungu	'member of the pumpkin clan'	Lozi
Mumba	'clay' or 'Mupundu tree' clan	Bemba
Munkombwe	'cock'	Tonga
Muzyamba	'hyena/black ants'	Tonga
Mwanambuyu	'Mbuyu's offspring, clan'	Lozi
Mwanamwambwa	'Mwambwa's offspring, clan'	Lozi
Nama	'lion'	Bemba, Luchazi
Nyangu	'beans'	Soli
Nyendwa	'vulva, vagina'	Bemba, Ila, Lamba, Nsenga, Tumbuka
Phiri	'clan of political rulers'	Chewa

HUNTING

"A young man receives a "call" to be a great hunter; much as a person has a call to become a missionary ... he receives a message from a supernatural force telling him that he has a vocation."¹⁰ Therefore, it was neither wishes nor hunger that drove men into becoming hunters.

Hunting is one of the ancient cults. The higher the degrees a hunter obtained in the cults the more powerful he was perceived and the greater the success on the hunting field; hunting prowess was more dependent on spiritual stamina than on mere experience. It was the highest expression of masculinity. A hunter would be assisted by ancestors to be as 'invisible' as they (ancestors) are to the animals being hunted until he hunted them down and, in turn; he would offer libations of the

⁹ Brian Siegel, "Chipimpi, Vulgar Clans, and Lala-Lamba Ethnohistory," *History in Africa* 35 (January 2008): 439–53, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hia.0.0003>.

¹⁰ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 11.

blood of the very animal to the ancestors.¹¹ Success on the huntingground was perceived as a gift from the spirits.¹²

Huntsmanship may thus be seen as acquirement of increasing supernatural power through successive degrees of initiation into a cult of the hunter shades. This power enables the hunter “to see animals quickly,” “to draw them to where he is,” and “to become invisible to them.”¹³

Each personal name that linked to hunting, therefore, may simply be perceived as a sector representative of the bigger hunting picture. The hunter was a very important part of any community as meat provided a major part of their nutrition. As has already been referred to, hunting was not simply a way of driving hunger away from people’s homes; rather, it was a religion or a relationship with the forces that controlled the jungle.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bakibinda	‘hunter’	Kaonde
Chibinda	‘a hunter’ who uses bows and traps	Lunda, Tumbuka
Chinyama	‘a big animal/piece of meat’	Luvale
Fundi	‘a hunter’	Bemba, Tumbuka
Habanyama	‘animal hunter’	Tonga
Hapunda	‘a type of spear, biggest among spears’	Tonga
Kalumba	‘a young hunter’	Bemba
Kapijimpanga	‘a hunter’	Kaonde
Kayombo	‘a hunter’	Luvale
Kazomba	‘a hunter’	Lunda
Lisulo	‘royal hunting party’	Lozi
Nkula	‘a god associated with hunting’	Lunda
Sifaya	‘a skilled hunter’	Lozi

FARMING

This includes both crop farming and pastoralism. In some regions, names that were concerned with farming strictly emphasized pastoralism, some emphasized crop farming while others balanced the two. Farming is one of Zambia’s major economic activities. Below are some examples of names from agriculture.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bwezani	‘return, retaliate harvest’	Chewa
Chakulimba	‘something that has been planted’	Bemba
Chomba	‘grains produced in the previous years’	Bemba
Kehumba	‘keeper of anything – livestock’	Lunda
Libala	‘a field’	Lenje
Lozgho	‘fresh beans’	Tumbuka

¹¹ Turner, 280–81; 289; 294–96.

¹² Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia*, 23.

¹³ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 11–12.

Masango	‘bluefish millet’	Luvale
Mubila	‘cattle-path’	Lozi
Mukamba	‘fresh cassava’	Luvale
Mulima	‘cultivator, farmer’	Lozi
Mumena	‘germinating plant’	Kaonde
Muunda	‘fields or garden’	Tonga
Muyeye	‘premature cob/maize’	Kaonde
Ngandwe	‘a tag (one put on cattle for identity)’	Ila
Shamatanga	‘one who owns herds of cattle’ or ‘one who grows a lot of pumpkins’	
	Tonga	

FISHING

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chilapu	‘padding stick’	Kaonde
Chinyimba	‘a kind of fish with barbs’	Bemba
Chiyambi	‘fisherman’	Luvale
Kalabo	‘small paddle’	Lozi
Kateya	‘small fish’	Lunda
Mukuna	‘fish’	Lunda
Njamba	‘kind of fishing basket’	Lozi
Sampa	‘a very large fish’	Bemba

HABITUAL TRAVEL

Travellers normally left their villages for varying causes. For some it was due to hunting, trade, administrative assignments (others even accompanying rulers). *Chitabanta* is more of a modern name as the first Chitabanta was a mail runner who used to move from one village to another and could only return to his home village after several days or weeks.

Liywa ‘sun, day’ (Lozi)

pr. Liywa kupa kuba ngenda kwenda

lit. The sun rises to give the traveller the way to pass

int. *Sunrise gives man freedom of action*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chenda	‘trader; habitual movement’	Tumbuka
Chitabanta	‘one who gallivants’	Bemba
Ilwendo	‘habitual traveller’	Lozi
Kamnthowa	‘of the path or travel’	Tumbuka
Kamwendo	‘small foot; traveller’	Chewa, Tumbuka
Kapelembe	‘great traveller’	Bemba
Mwenda	‘traveller’	Bemba, Lozi, Tonga
Ngenda	‘visitor, traveller’	Lozi
Sibbilishokwe	‘traveller’	Tonga

Suntwe 'hyena' i.e. one who travels a lot

Tonga

LEADERSHIP

Atoma 'when he falls sick' (Lozi)

pr. Ng'undi atoma kusialela kunyima tangombe

lit. An ailing bull lags behind the herd

int. *Effective leadership depends on personal good health*

Katondo 'grudge' (Lozi)

pr. Mbumu kawakatondo na mubika

lit. The king has no grudge against the slave

int. *True leadership lies in impartiality*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chanda	'princess, noble person, pioneer'	Bemba
Chimba	'inherited title of the most senior counsel of the Bemba Royal Establishment'	Bemba
Hangala	'hat made of bird feathers'	Tonga
Imaanga	'builder, reconciler'	Lozi
Kafumukache	'sub-chief'	Kaonde
Kafunga	'shepherd or pastor'	Kaonde
Kamzati	'small pillar'	Tumbuka
Kanongesha	'the last one to leave, the one who used up	the fire wood' Lunda
Kasomo	'leader of a troupe, the flag bearer'	Bemba
Malangiso	'to show, to demonstrate, to give an example'	Tumbuka
Mununga	'joiner, arbitrator'	Lozi
Mwanawina	'prince'	Lozi
Nduna	'head man/woman'	Luvale
Ngambela	'assistant to the chief'	Luvale
Weruzani	'settle the dispute, pass judgment'	Chewa, Tumbuka
Yambayamba	'a starter, someone who does not have power but is influential'	Lunda

PROVERBS, POETRY, PHRASES AND PANEGYRICS

Compare the Following two Proverbs on the Value of Human Life and Harmonious Living:

1. Munu 'human being' (Lozi)

pr. Munu kayumbwa

lit. A human being is never thrown away

int. A human being is priceless

2. Sula 'disregard' (verb) (Bemba)

Pr. Ako sulile e kopa nook

Lit. The man you have despised is the one who marries your mother

Int. *the person you have despised may turn out to be the one you need most*

Or

pr. Sule mbwa, umuntu taba musula

lit. Disrespect a dog, a human being is never disrespected

int. *Disregard a wrong committed against oneself or others*

3. Musalu 'edible green vegetable' (Bemba)

pr. Musalu wali pe samba lelo waba pa mulu

lit. 'The leaf that was at the bottom is on top today'

int. *referring to the rise of a perceived nonentity*

Compare the following proverbs, which are loosely related, on patience:

1. Ailoola 'when it darkens' (Lozi)

pr. Ailoola anakene

lit. When it darkens, it soon brightens again

int. *Things will always get better for someone who has the patience to wait*

2. Masiku 'nights' (Lozi)

pr. Masiku ailoola anakene

lit. When it darkens, it soon brightens again

int. Things will always get better for someone who has the patience to wait

3. Sunga 'keep' (Bemba)

pr. sunga umukoshi, ubulungu tabwayafya

lit. Look after your neck, beads are not hard to find or look after or recover if lost or damaged int. *proverb encourages chastity for young people as it puts them at a premium*

Compare the other two below:

1. Isilabo 'owner of a paddle' (Lozi)

pr. Ikayeme silabo libe bokame ng'alulula mako

lit. I can't praise a paddle for its blade before I can reach home

int. *Sometimes physical beauty has no practical value*

2. Natasha 'thank you' (Bemba)

pr. Uwa kwensho bushiku, ba mutashe lyo bwacha

lit. The one who helps you move in the night is to be thanked after day break

A Tumbuka proverb on shyness

Mwandila (varinats: Mughandila/Muwandila) 'shy or ashamed'

Muwandila mukwenda chimbala chili muthumba

Translation: becoming emaciated while the leftover food is in his bag

Note: a member of the clan was getting thin 'for lack of food' yet the person had food left overnight (chimbala) which he did not eat because he was shy or ashamed to eat it in the presence of people. Equivalent of Bemba proverb: *akansoni kafwilile mwibula*, i.e. 'the shy one died in a leaf' or the modern Copperbelt (Kopala) version: *sebana wikute*, i.e. 'endure embarrassment and be satisfied [with food]'.
The above adage encourages the hearer to be proud of what she/he stands for regardless of the opinions of others.

Chiluba 'one who is lost'

Chiluba waluba kubena bukwe

Chiluba, the one who does not know where his in-laws are

Chimfwembe 'playground for evil spirits'

Chimfwembe Kabandami we wampumi iyangalapo ifibanda

Chimfwembe, the quail upon whose forehead the evil spirits play

Kampamba 'force or energy'

Kampamba Shimwatule ilulu, uleisa bwino pabana bobé

Kampamba, the one who pierces the skies, come gently upon your children

Kasalwe 'the chosen one'

Kasalwe chilungu, wasalwa mu bulungu

The chosen bead, the bead that is chosen from among many beads

Sampa 'a very large fish'; symbolic of one's strength

Sampa kapetanjela we chisabi chikulu

The big fish (whose weight and strength) bends the iron fish hook

A self-praise panegyric referring to strength

DEATH OR TRANSIENCE

Zambian traditional thought seems to hold what Colson (2006) diagnosed of the Tonga and Turner (1967) of the Ndembu that 'the dead are with us'. They only shed off their bodies upon death. Therefore, the living have the responsibility of remembering, feeding (through libations), and praising the dead. On the other hand, the dead (ancestors) are mandated with the task of protecting the living and empowering them for their day to day work. "For the dead depend on the living – to be sustained by food, offerings and memories, and the living depend on the dead – for strength, health, fertility, fame and good fortune." Unpleasant circumstances in the lives of the living including sickness, bad luck, infertility, droughts and so on are a form of punishment inflicted on the living for forgetting or ignoring their ancestors.¹⁴

¹⁴ Turner, 294.

Kapepi, Mwela, Mpepo, Mooya, Muuya, Mooyo and *Moyo* at the ideological pole also represent the idea of living with the dead. Their spirits can be felt as the wind among us but cannot be seen except, of course, in special circumstances as séances. In some instances, divination involves a séance.¹⁵ These spirits ('human spirits without bodies') can therefore be called upon at a naming ceremony to come and occupy the body of a newborn.

The highest number of Zambian names with a 'death tag' in this study came from the Eastern Province. Even so, their meaning or intention for using them was mostly found to be ironic. It is rare for traditional names from some parts of the country to directly carry a good meaning as in *Khumbireko* 'to admire' (i.e. baby named to tell people that they should admire the baby and the family, Chewa). Many names with a negative meaning are given in order that ancestral spirits may become uninterested in the new-born and thereby lay no claim on the child to the world of the dead. They are also given to protect a child from being incarnated by troublesome or undesired ancestral spirits.¹⁶

Mafa 'deaths' (Lozi)

pr. Amafa na kwakulonda akaaibaa katele

lit. At a mourning vigil to which one has not been invited one is not expected to break a calabash
int. *it is a waste of time to get too involved in an affair that doesn't concern one*

Nkonde 'lamentation' (Bemba)

praise: fwe bene Nkoonde ishipwa, bena kulila misowa

lit: we are the people of the Lamentation Clan, where mourning never ends, we are those who cry at wakes and funerals

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Akapelwa	'one for whom it (the sun) won't rise'	Lozi
Chakumanda	'belongs to the grave'	Chewa, Ngoni
Cheelo	'nothing/meaningless, ghost'	Tonga
Chisola	'having many miscarriages, eventually giving birth'	Luvale
Kalaluka	'one who cannot last (live) long'	Lozi
Kanfunti	'one believed to replace someone when they die'	Lunda
Kasemuka	'the mother of the child dies after giving birth'	Luvale
Katwishi	'uncertainty'	Bemba
Kayuka	'I will know what took my child'	Kaonde
Kibepesho	'something unreal' i.e. when children keep on dying, the fourth person bears this name	Kaonde
Komani	'kill him'	Tumbuka
Kufa	'to die' i.e. born amidst deaths	Nsenga
Kyapusa	'born after someone's death'	Kaonde

¹⁵ Turner, 282; Turner, 290; Turner, 296.

¹⁶ Ogonna Chuks-Orji, *Names from Africa: Their Origin, Meaning, and Pronunciation*, Edited by Keith Baird (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1972), 76; Mukumbuta Lisimba, *Lozi Names in Language and Culture* (Libreville: International Centre for Bantu Civilisations, 2000), 108–9.

Malilwe	‘mourning, funeral’	Tonga
Mambepa	‘liar; false hope (even this one is temporary)’	Bemba, Mambwe
Mukomanji	‘kill him/her’ i.e. taunting witches	Namwanga

ORPHANHOOD

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chishala	‘left behind’ i.e. orphan	Bemba
Kashala	‘left behind’ i.e. orphan	Kaonde
Kashiwa	‘left behind’ i.e. orphan	Bemba
Kasiwa	‘to be alone, orphaned’ i.e. baby who is an orphan	Tumbuka
Kasuba	‘the sun’ i.e. child will be brought up by the sun	Bemba, Lamba
Kaulanda	‘to be alone, orphaned’ i.e. baby who is an orphan	Tumbuka
Masiye	‘orphan’	Chewa, Lozi
Musiyalela	‘left behind, orphan’	Lozi
Musiyalike	‘orphan’	Lozi

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE, POLYGAMY, INFIDELITY, DIVORCE, ETC.

Some names are given to reflect the state of a couple’s marriage. The following names indicate tendencies of infidelity, polygamy or divorce. “Infidelity on the man’s part would result into labour problems and/or death for the woman [his pregnant wife]if the passage was small for the baby to come out, it was attributed to the man’s infidelity. If on the other hand the baby was situated diagonally, then the woman had misbehaved during pregnancy.”¹⁷

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chimensomenso	Casanova; Don Juan	Luvale
Amasulitsa	‘to loosen’ i.e. promiscuous	Chewa
Katumbi	tree used for medicines against the taboos concerning adultery	Bemba
Lwinso lwinso	man who courts many girls but never marries them	Bemba
Msiyana	‘leave each other, departing’	Ngoni, Chewa
Mbaci	‘let them leave, who needs them?’	Tumbuka
Mukaluhali	polygamous person	Luvale
Mukhalepo	‘you can stay and I can leave’	Chewa
Mwalimbamina	‘prostitute or Casanova’	Soli
Mwanishupa	‘you have bothered me’	Nsenga, Chewa
Nchimbizyani	‘chase me away’	Tumbuka
Nkhumbo	‘stomach’	Tumbuka
Nshimbami	‘a wild rat which is used for bewitching a man so that he is always at home’	Kaonde
Nthimbo	‘physical marks after been physically beaten’	Tumbuka
Tapela	‘I have had enough’	
Tiripilenji	‘how will I pay the fine?’	Chewa

¹⁷ Lisimba, *Lozi Names in Language and Culture*, 22.

Tisiyane 'leave each other, departing'

Chewa, Ngoni

POVERTY, SUFFERING, PROBLEMS OR SICKNESS

The healer is the killer, according to Henny Blokland's study of the Sukuma-Nyamwezi in Tanzania. "The spirits who heal have first caused the very affliction they heal."¹⁸ Generally, there is a prevalent belief in Zambia that exalts and personifies suffering or tragedy as a teacher of wisdom, as in: Kubabala kufuma hakucimonahu (Lunda), implying that a person is wiser after misfortunes¹⁹ and the proverbs attached to personal names below.

Kanchule 'let me suffer' (Bemba)

pr. Ubucushi bupa mano

lit. Suffering gives wisdom

Matwi 'ears' (Lozi)

pr. Matwi a mwelwa luyupela kuule

lit. The ears of a poor person hear from afar

int. A needy person pays attention to his potential helpers

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Kamwengo	'a child born during calamities such as hunger'	Luvale
Kanchule	'let me suffer'	Bemba
Kushupa	'difficulty'	Bemba
Kyabaka	'suffering'	Kaonde
Makabi	'suffering/ problems'	Lunda
Manyando	'suffering'	Lozi, Kaonde
Mbalanda	'they are alone, they are poverty-stricken'	Tumbuka
Mina	'to suffer'	Ngoni
Muzala	'hunger'	Luvale
Mwanjananzala	'you have found hunger'	Tonga
Mwelwa	'poor one'	Lozi
Thungwe	'Two Ngwee, Zambian currency'	Chewa, Nsenga
Zyandamana	'holding with two hands' i.e. survival of the fittest'	Tonga

SOCIAL REJECTION

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Kalimukwa	'unknown one, nonentity'	Lozi
Muyumbwa	'rejected one'	Lozi
Tirimuti	'where do we stand? Where are we?'	Chewa
Tiyenkhu	'Where should we go? We have nowhere to go'	Tumbuka

¹⁸ Henny Blokland, "Kings, Spirits & Brides in Unyamwezi Tanzania," in *The Quest for Fruition through Ngoma: Political Aspects of Healing in Southern Africa*, ed. Rijk van Dijk, Ria Reis, and Marja Spierenburg (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2000), 14.

¹⁹ Mukumbuta Lisimba, *Kongo Proverbs and the Origins of Bantu Wisdom* (Libreville: International Centre for Bantu Civilisations, 1999), 232.

Tongopenya 'we just look and watch'

Chewa

HUMAN ATTRIBUTES OR CONDUCT

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chiheni	'bad person, thug'	Tumbuka
Chilufya	'absent mindedness, forgetfulness'	Bemba
Chimensomenso	'Casanova'	Luvale
Inyambo	'helper'	Lozi
Kabinga	'reliable person'	Kaonde
Mulijenjuyu	'you have no guts, courage'	Tumbuka
Nalumango	'stingy one'	Lozi
Nkandu	'generous woman'	Bemba
Nshimbi	'iron, strong person'	Kaonde, Bemba
Powamana	'intelligent woman'	Luvale
Sakulanda	'one who likes shopping'	Lunda
Siyankondo	'war/fighter or bully'	Tonga
Taima	'boastful'	Lunda
Twaambo	'quarreling, talkative'	Tonga

GENEROSITY, HOSPITALITY, APPRECIATION, BLESSING

According to the Zambian traditional belief, 'to give is to receive'. In his book, *Kongo Proverbs and the Origins of Bantu Wisdom*, where he studied proverbs from Central, Eastern and Southern Africa and the eastern part of West Africa, Lisimba observed that this belief was widespread in all these areas.²⁰ Lisimba further observed that other cultures in the Western world were opposed to this disposition as they believed that 'to give is to lose'.²¹

Kacana 'small one' (Lozi)

pr. Kacana kumubowe tandopu

lit. A small gift from a friend is an elephant

int. someone who gives you even a tiny gift deserves to be thanked for it

Imeyi 'water lover'

pr. Meyi kakaambuka wandala

lit. Water doesn't spare a hungry person

int. A visitor who asks for water (to drink) needs something to eat (as well)

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bupe	'generosity, liberality, a gift'	Bemba, Kaonde
Chawanagwa	'a blessing, a gift'	Tumbuka
Chipecto	'a gift'	Tonga
Chisomo	'blessing'	Ngoni, Chewa
Choolwe	'luck'	Tonga

²⁰ Lisimba, 187.

²¹ Mukumbuta Lisimba. "Interview on Zambian Names" by Chanda Penda, Lusaka," 8 May 2013

Kasalwe	‘the chosen one’	Bemba
Mate	‘saliva’ i.e. one blessed with saliva as per custom	Lozi, Bemba
Mapesho	‘blessings’	Kaonde
Namate	‘one blessed with saliva’	Lozi
Natasha	‘thank you’	Bemba
Sachiwe	‘someone who gives a lot’	Luvale
Twamusanchila	‘we thank him/her very much’	Lunda, Kaonde
Wana	‘gift’	Lunda
Weyecha	‘generous person, someone who gives a lot’	Luvale
Wongani	‘be thankful’	Tumbuka

CONFLICT, HATRED OR JEALOUSY

Maboshe ‘grip’ (Lozi)

pr. Ukuboseka ukwanganya kwisana nyaci ni bakatondo

lit. To grip one’s arm is to have it encircled, to provoke a buffalo is to have a tree nearby

int. *He who stirs up trouble must weigh the consequences*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bakiliboyi	‘silly boy’	Kaonde
Bulwani	‘enmity or hostility’	Bemba
Chidano	‘hatred’	Chewa, Tumbuka
Chilezu	‘looking down on others’	Lunda
Chizonde	‘to ill wish’	Tonga
Kapalai	‘great war’	Luvale
Kapatamoyo	‘someone who hates you deeply’	Kaonde
Kasolo	‘quarrelsome, pugnacious person’	Bemba
Lubinda	‘argumentative one’ or ‘stubborn’	Lozi
Makondo	‘war’	Tonga
Nyaulombu	‘jealous woman’	Lunda
Situmbeko	‘act of igniting’	Lozi
Zhita	‘a child born during war’	Luvale
Zindaba	‘discussions, disagreements’	Ngoni, Tumbuka

WORK, HARD WORK, HAVING PLENTY

Chilumba ‘arrogance; pride’ (Bemba)

Chilumba nkankala

The arrogance of wealth

Mombola ‘calm one’ (Lozi)

pr. Kushemba ufumu ni moombo cima

lit. To seduce riches is to have a calm heart

int. *Patience is a key to success*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
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Alilenji	‘what should you cry for?’	Chewa
Fonkofonko	‘diligence and zeal in performing one’s duties’	Bemba
Kafoka	‘one who is fiercely diligent about his duties’	Bemba
Kasoka	‘house roofing expert’	Lunda, Luvale
Maboshe	‘hardworkmanship’ or ‘grip’	Lozi
Milimo	‘work’	Tonga
Mujebele	‘hard worker’	Tonga
Muketeka	‘knocking off’	Kaonde
Musambazi	‘a wealthy and enlightened person’ derived from <i>Basambazi</i> -‘bourgeoisie’ Tumbuka	
Mushila	‘those who choose what to eat and what not to eat’	Kaonde
Pichi	‘rich man’	Luvale
Simushi	‘born under a <i>mushi</i> tree’ i.e. born of well-to-do family’	Lozi
Sompa	‘pounding’	Lunda
Zingalume	‘they (bees) are biting me’ i.e. no sweet without sweat	Chewa

OTHER SKILL/ TALENT

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chimpanta	‘blacksmith’	Tonga
Chingangu	‘specialist who plays the xylophone’	Lunda
Chitengi	‘builder’	Luvale
Kafula, Kasongo	‘blacksmith’	Bemba
Kalenga	‘painter’	Bemba
Kiboko	‘gifted’	Kaonde
Libingi	‘someone who plaits the hair’	Luvale
Manenga	‘skillful dancer’	Lozi
Mulemena	‘entertainer of people’	Kaonde
Mutendango	‘blanket maker’	Lozi
Sijamba	‘hoe’ i.e. relating to a blacksmith	Tonga
Soneka	‘writer’	Lunda

CONSPIRACY

Sometimes parents sensed impending danger of any kind, for instance, from enemies, witches or wizards. They named a child to remind them of the fear and helplessness they felt.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Alibandila	‘they are on their way’	Lozi
Amusaa	‘they are calling him’ i.e. with evil intent	Lozi
Haazita	‘group of enemies who want to attack’	Tonga
Mizinga	‘to attack (of many) to surround and attack’	Tonga
Mukhalilamo	‘to be naïve, to be oblivious of what is going on around you’	Chewa
Panganani	‘to arrange, organize, discuss, plan; to collude’	Tumbuka

SORCERY, RAINMAKING, MEDIUMSHIP (RELIGIOUS)

Rainmaking spirits are considered the highest spirits worthy of worship in most Zambian societies as they literally hold communities together by way of providing food. In some societies, they are also responsible for bringing animals in numbers for a hunter. Notwithstanding this preeminence, sorcery is a crosscutting belief that is evident in all matrilineal societies. "Witchcraft was usually family specific, clan specific or community specific. It followed a certain blood line for quicker results."²² Even if some unpublished contemporary academics in lecture rooms respond with outright criticism questioning the authenticity of the existence of supernatural phenomena, sufficient empirical evidence is available around the world to substantiate these claims in a Zambian set up.

In *The Kingdom of the Cults*, Dr. Walter Martin (2003) postulated that Spiritism or Spiritualism (a religion much related to sorcery and mediumship) was the most ancient cult that was existent even in Biblical Old Testament times and had crept even into modern times. In the United States, estimates of practitioners of Spiritism stood at 500 thousand to 700 thousand whereas world statistics were estimated at 1.5 million to 2 million in 1949. By 2002, estimates stood at 15 million 'professed' spiritists in Brazil alone and 20 million worldwide. However, he was of the view that statistics for South America alone could even exceed 50 million if certain religious parameters were to be drawn. Additionally, the investigation conducted by Sir Oliver Lodge and Dr. Richard Hodgson, of the British Society for Psychical Research, Professor William James of the Harvard University and 'father of American Psychology', Professor James Hyslop of Coloumbia University and Sir William Crooks on a Boston medium, Mrs. Leonora E. Piper was a breakthrough in providing empirical evidence in academia of supernatural activity. Other mediums observed could even levitate in full view of the public.²³

Chilufya 'forgetfulness' (Bemba)

Chilufya wa lufya manga ne yakwe

Chilufya who has lost the charms or fetishes, and also his own charms

Maando 'wings' (Lozi)

pr. Kuulwa maando mbanituka kuta ku wilu kusiya likukolomba kalikusii na moyo

tr. If I had wings I would fly away to go to heaven and leave the vicious witch who is threatening my life

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Banda	rainmaking priests clan	Chewa
Baladye	'bear children and you eat them'	Chewa, Ngoni
Bwanga	'witchcraft charm or spell'	Kaonde, Bemba
Chinkuli	'gourd, meaningless'	Tonga
Chipepo	'sorcerer'	Bemba

²² Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia*, 24; Ngulube, 28.

²³ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, ed. Kevin Rische and Jill Martin (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2003), 261; Martin, 265–66.

Chuumbwe	‘grave’	Tonga
Mahamba	‘demon possessed’	Lunda
Monze	rainmaker	Tonga
Mukomanji	‘kill him/her’ i.e. taunting witches	Namwanga
Mukulwambula	‘renowned rainmaker’	Lozi
Musopa	‘worshipper’	Tumbuka
Nyamayao	‘this meat (human meat) belongs to them’	Tumbuka
Sakambinda	‘demons or a spirit’	Luvale
Shimwalule	‘rainmaker, priest’	Bemba
Silowa, Mulowa	‘victim of sorcery’	Lozi
Sumbwanyambe	‘god’s creature’	Lozi

OBJECTS

Objects such as Chikosa (Bemba) or Pande (Kaonde) referring to a *bangle* may represent magical powers believed to be contained in a name. An armlet in Lozi nomenclature is a magical instrument that protects the new-born from evil forces that inhabit the invisible world.²⁴ Beads on a thread tied around the neck or the waist are among other objects that parents from different traditional groupings put on a child for protection. Chipoya (Bemba, Luvale) and Machila (Bemba) for stretcher or hammock symbolize solidarity, unity and co-operation.²⁵

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chiko	‘cooking stick’	Luvale
Chikochi	‘scotch cart’	Tonga
Chipimo	‘measuring vessel or object’	Bemba
Chipoya	‘stretcher’	Bemba, Luvale
Foloko	‘folk’	Kaonde
Hamulangu	‘bells’	Tonga
Kamzati	‘small pillar, support for all kinds of roof houses, shelter, etc.	Tumbuka
Kaswatu	‘a small dry piece of twig used to start fire to burn large logs’	Tumbuka
Luneta	‘trumpet’	Luvale
Matafwali	‘pan bricks’	Bemba, Kaonde
Mukanda	‘book’	Lunda, Luvale
Mutumba	‘unfired clay pot’	Lozi
Ngondo	‘a kind of mask worn during <i>Makishi</i> dance’	Chokwe, Luvale, Luchazi
Nshindano	‘needle’	Kaonde, Bemba
Pande	‘bangle’	Kaonde
Songiso	‘deceiving object’ or ‘plaything’	Lozi

SOLIDARITY, HARMONY

Names in this segment may endeavor to explain the general peace that is inherent in Zambian communities. There may or may not be a probability that the preceding assumption is true as

²⁴ Lisimba, *Lozi Names in Language and Culture*, 115.

²⁵ Lisimba, *Kongo Proverbs and the Origins of Bantu Wisdom*, 133.

some Zambian Civic Education scholars argue. However, as this study is ongoing, we hope to make a more authentic stance on this subject in future editions. Peace, harmony and unity (One Zambia One Nation) are virtues to be pursued at all costs. Africans perceive solidarity as an enhancement of strength.²⁶ Ngoni communities emphasized self-control and self-restraint.²⁷

Kabakantunda 'nothing will be taken from there' (Lozi)

pr. Bakili Kabasingi kutundanga

lit. Out of two people one should not be taken (away)

int. *Solidarity is a source of strength*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chimwemwe	'contentment, happiness'	Bemba, Namwanga, Tumbuka, Chewa
Chitotenena	'love'	Luvala
Dizgha	'to be quiet'	Tumbuka
Hambayi	'slap' i.e. pacifier	Tonga
Joya	'to have restraint'	Tumbuka
Kahunda	'patience'	Lunda
Kalela	'one who looks after others well'	Bemba
Kutemwa	'to love'	Kaonde
Kyaulusa	'a merciful person'	Kaonde
Lusekelo	'joy'	Kaonde
Mwangala	'joy'	Lozi, Bemba
Siatontola	'generally quiet'	Tonga
Silembe	'tranquility'	Lozi
Sula	'be disrespectful or disregard a wrong committed against oneself or others'	Bemba
Zangi	'love'	Luvala, Chokwe

SLAVERY, RELEGATION OR CONFINEMENT

The names below allude to or have elements linked to the theme of Slavery or confinement. This is a very important theme in the history of Zambia, Africa and the entire world. It is a subject that may be currently receiving casual attention but still alive in Zambian nomenclature.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bwana	white man/boss; baby born after the arrival of the first white man	(Swahili) Tonga

²⁶ Lisimba, 190.

²⁷ Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia*, 77.

Chimbali	the slave of a white person	Mbunda
Chingwali	a shackle for the head, a fetter	Mbunda
Kafungulwa	'one who has been freed'	Lozi
Kalyati	'prison'	Bemba
Kawina	(diminutive) 'slave' or 'servant'	Lozi
Mufungwa	(variant: Kafungwa) 'tethered one' <i>int.</i> slave	Lozi
Muwina	'slave'	Lozi
Nkole	from <i>bunkole</i> : 'slavery'	Bemba

COLONISATION, MODERNITY, OR EXTERNAL CONTACT

This category includes names that were introduced into Zambia through interactions with external groups. This includes during precolonial, colonial and postcolonial periods. For example, interactions with the Kololo saw names such as Likezo, Puteho, Sisupo and Tabo come into Zambia.²⁸ Similarly, among the Bemba, Chibiliti and Chupa came as a result of trade interactions with the Swahili while Musukuma with the Sukuma of modern Tanzania.²⁹ During colonial times, names such as Malita, Melu and Safeli (Bemba), Musonko (Bemba, Kaonde) sneaked into Zambian nomenclature. Examples of modernisation include: Likopitu or Likopetulu 'helicopter' (Luchazi, Mbunda), Mali 'money' (Lunda) and Maguswi 'train' (Tonga). Below are more examples.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Ayinjini	'engine' i.e. a very strong man	Nsenga
Chipoya	'stretcher'	Luvale
Fwalanga	'money'	Luvale
Jekete	'jacket'	Nsenga, Chewa
Kapotwe	'wire'	Bemba
Kiliboyi	'silly boy' i.e. told to a man by colonial masters	Kaonde
Machungwa	'oranges'	Bemba
Malaiti	'current, electricity' or 'electrical lighting'	Bemba
Masuwa	'train'	Lunda, Chokwe
Mingochi	'mines'	Chokwe
Musheketela	'mosquito net'	Lunda
Musonko	'tax'	Kaonde, Bemba
Musungu	'white man'	Bemba

²⁸ Lisimba, *Lozi Names in Language and Culture*, 24.

²⁹ Mulenga M. Kapwepwe, *Some Bemba Names and Their Meanings* (Lusaka: Mulenga Kapwepwe, 2002), 23.

Muzungu	‘traveller’ referring to the white man, word derived from Kiswahili Kaonde	
Nyundo	‘hammer’	Lozi
Piipi	‘sound of a hooter or honk’	Tonga
Sando	‘hammer’	Chewa, Nsenga
Shabyambo	‘journalist’	Lunda
Sondo	‘iron’	Lozi

NAMES DUE TO CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE

Names in this segment represent an evolution in the naming culture in some sectors of the Zambian society towards as a result of Christian influence. Some parents construct new names for their children inspired by their Christian experience. It is also worth noting that there are many more English (Christian) names, beyond the scope of this book, that have been coined in Zambia.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Atotwe	‘let him (god) be praised’	Kaonde
Chilombela	‘one who prays’	Luvala
Kafunga	‘shepherd or pastor; clergy’	Kaonde
Kanelu	‘angel’	Lunda
Kazhila	‘holy’	Lunda
Liseli	‘light’	Lozi
Mahamba	‘demon possessed’	Lunda
Malaika	‘angel’ (Arabic)	Bemba
Mapalo	‘blessings’	Bemba
Mapesho	‘blessings’	Kaonde
Mwanche	‘a doll, usually made of wet mud’ i.e. reminiscent of Adam and Eve and the Christian theory of creation	Tumbuka
Nkumbu	‘grace’	Lamba, Bemba
Sabata	‘Sabbath’	Lamba, Tonga
Sande	‘Sunday’	Lamba, Bemba
Sepiso	‘promise’	Lozi
Sondo	‘Sunday’	Tonga
Tapelo	‘prayer’	Lozi
Tumelo	‘faith’	Lozi

NAMES FROM CIRCUMSTANCES OF BIRTH

Disability is a subject that cannot be overemphasized in any society. In Zambian nomenclature there are a number of names which indicate the presence of a disability, for example, *Chiyanga* ('disabled person' Luvale), *Sianga* ('cripple' Lozi), *Lemana* ('crippled' Kaonde), *Litwai* ('crippled person' Lunda), *Hadiimana* ('bent, lame' Tonga) or *Mpofu* ('blind person' Bemba). Other themes under this category include induced pregnancy, position of birth, spatial-temporal relations, place of birth, and place of origin or residence and so on.

APPEARANCE

Some names are given based on the physical characteristics of the baby as exemplified below.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Busuma	'beauty'	Bemba
Chibinkhe	'the dark one'	Tumbuka
Chibuno	'waist' i.e. breach born baby	Tonga
Hamakubwi	'big cheeks'	Tonga
Kasabula	'beautiful woman'	Kaonde
Kuwaha	'beautiful'	Lunda
Lungowe	'beauty'	Lozi
Maluba	'flowers' i.e. attractive child	Tumbuka, Bemba
Mubili	'body' i.e. fat or huge person	Bemba
Mwiloola	'very dark one'	Lozi
Tunkanya	'to be fat'	Lunda
Uhemya	'beautiful'	Luvale

INDUCED PREGNANCY

In her study among Luvale women, Anita Spring observed that fertility problems were widespread in Zambia.³⁰ Ngulube opined that throughout Zambian matrilineal societies “Talk about one’s inability to have children was always severe with a lot of teasing in songs both for impotent and barren people.”³¹ Thus the widespread use of supernatural and other means of intervention for child bearing, evident in personal names from across the nation, may partly be explained by the prevalent fertility problems. Some Zambian women resort to using traditional medicines to prove their womanhood to their husbands, families or communities. Traditionally, a woman earns her place in society and becomes socially accepted in the world of female adulthood through pregnancy, childbirth and child-raising.³² This can readily be proven from the ‘fertility strike’ that women in the entire Nyamwezi kingdom of King Milambo went on during the closing chapters of the 19th century.³³

Turner identified fertility cults to which some women from North-western Zambia belonged. A woman who had miscarriages, abortions, amenorrhea, excessive menstrual discharge or who was barren was mostly punished by the spirit of her maternal grandmother, mother or sister for ‘forgetting them’. This spirit came out of the grave and sat in her body until she propitiated the spirit through ritual prescribed by a diviner.³⁴ Colson postulated that diviners and healers worked under the guidance of an ancestral spirit.³⁵ Turner recognized symbols for such ritual as including portions of fruit bearing trees and roots which represented children; these were thought to have the power to make the woman fruitful.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chikoolo	‘roots or herbs’	Tonga
Chimika	(variant: <i>Tamika</i>) ‘to stop, to halt’	Tumbuka
Chipalo	‘child born through traditional medicine’	Bemba
Chipango	‘a child born after prayers to ancestral spirits’	Luvale
Chiteu	‘leaves’ i.e. born after mother took traditional medicine due to difficulties in child bearing	
Soli		
Kamizhi	‘of the roots’ i.e. child born out of herbal use	Kaonde
Kamwanga	‘one born in the midst (with the aid) of medicine’	Lozi
Kasapo	‘charm for fertility’	Bemba
Kasweka	‘hiding, not exposed to people first when born’	Lunda

³⁰ Anita Spring, “Epidemiology of Spirit Possession among the Luvale of Zambia,” in *Women in Ritual and Symbolic Roles*, ed. J. Hoch-Smith and A. Spring (New York: Plenum Press, 1978).

³¹ Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia*, 12.

³² M. C. Dupré and D.F. Bryceson, “Mothers, Healers, and Farmers in Congo,” in *Women Wielding the Hoe: Lessons from Rural Africa to Feminist Theory and Development Practice* (Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1995), 155; Ngulube, *Some Aspects of Growing up in Zambia*, 20–21.

³³ Blokland, “Kings, Spirits & Brides in Unyamwezi Tanzania,” 12–13.

³⁴ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 12; Turner, 32.

³⁵ Elizabeth Colson, *Tonga Religious Life in the Twentieth Century* (Lusaka: Bookworld Publishers, 2006), 47.

Mabula	‘leaves’ i.e. birth aided by herbs	Bemba
Mafo	‘leaves’ i.e. birth aided by herbs	Luvale
Magodi	‘herbs and medicines’	Ngoni, Tumbuka
Michelo	‘roots or herbs’	Tonga
Mukunwa	‘planted one’ i.e. born with the aid of herbs’	Lozi

SPATIO-TEMPORAL CONSTRUCTS

African Time

‘Time heals’ is an aphorism that is inclined to emphasizing the African cultural conception of time and not a mere construction of human wisdom.³⁶

Mweshi ‘the moon’, or ‘a month’ (Bemba)

Pr. Umweshi mulundu mabaka, te kuti ulaye wa milandu

Tr. ‘The moon or a month moves across the sky in leaps and bounds, and one should not promise to pay a fine in such a short time’

int. One should not be too precise in marking out a time in which he will fulfil something³⁷

African time is past oriented. “The future is virtually absent because events which lie in it have not taken place, they have not been realized, and cannot therefore constitute time.”³⁸ According to Mazrui and Mphande, harsh methods of labour discipline during colonial times reoriented African workers in Kenya and Malawi to the art of quantifying time with respect to the sale of their labour power.³⁹ Strategic planning is modern to Africa and this might explain why it may prove difficult for a traditional African to make time bound decisions about the future. The proverb below shows a lack of boldness to face the future.

Kunyima ‘behind’ (Lozi)

Pr. Kunyima unyangubele kuuso nonyibaa

Lit. ‘The past must catch up with me, the future is killing me’

Int. Death is better than endless suffering

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bukufu	‘night/ darkness’	Kaonde
Bulombu	‘the appearing of the moon’	Lunda

³⁶ Rijk van Dijk, “Ngoma and Born-Again Fundamentalism: Contesting Representations of Time in Urban Malawi,” in *The Quest for Fruition through Ngoma: Political Aspects of Healing in Southern Africa*, ed. Rijk van Dijk, Ria Reis, and Marja Spierenburg (Lusaka: Bookworld, 2000), 140.

³⁷ Mulenga Kapwepwe, *Times and Seasons in Bemba* (M. Kapwepwe, 2003), 7.

³⁸ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions & Philosophy* (Double Day and Company, Inc., 1970), 11–21.

³⁹ A. Mazrui and L. Mphande, “Time and Labour in Colonial Africa: The Case of Kenya and Malawi,” in *Time in the Black Experience*, ed. J.K. Adjaye (London: Greenwood, 1994), 103; Frederick Cooper, “Colonizing Time: Work Rhythms and Labor Conflicts in Colonial Mombasa,” in *Colonialism and Culture*, ed. Nicholas B. Dirks (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 209–46.

Chibelu	‘Saturday’ i.e. born on Saturday	Lenje
Chibelushi	‘Saturday, or vigil’ i.e. born on Saturday	Bemba
Mufumbi	‘continuous rain’	Bemba
Hamvula	‘rain’	Tonga
Imasiku	‘born at dawn’ or ‘born at night’	Lozi
Jolezya	‘evening’	Tonga
Matika	‘January’	Tumbuka
Milimo	‘work’ i.e. referent of the rainy season	Bemba, Tonga
Muvumbi	‘non-stop rain’	Kaonde
Lukumbi	‘the moon’	Luvale
Moonde	‘born during first quarter of the moon’	Lozi
Muleza	‘lightning, god’ (born during rainy season)	Tumbuka
Mwaka	‘year’	Tonga, Lozi, Bemba, Namwanga
Simuzingini	‘rooster; born after the first cock crow at about 04:00 a.m.’	Tonga
Tundwe	‘October’	Lunda
Vula	‘child born during the rainy season’ ‘December’	Luvale, Tumbuka

POSITION OF BIRTH

These are names given based on the position a child held in a family.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chiboola	‘third born of three consecutive sons’	Tonga
Chifumu	‘second; second born of twins’	Chewa, Tumbuka
Chikomba	‘born after twins’	Lunda
Chikulu	‘the first born of a set of twins’	Bemba
Kabinda	‘a mother’s favourite child’ or ‘last born child’	Bemba
Kapa	‘twin number two’	Lunda
Katalu	‘(twins) if one dies the remaining one is <i>Katalu</i> ’	Luvale
Mamanino	‘last, last born baby’	Tonga
Masialeti	‘last born’	Lozi
Mbuyu	‘twin number one’	Kaonde
Nkolombo	‘a child after twins’	Kaonde
Twatwa	‘first born’	Luvale

Wamunyima ‘the one coming behind’ i.e. last born	Lozi
Yambani ‘you will begin; first born baby’	Chewa, Tumbuka

PLACE OF BIRTH

Some names were given based on the place where the child was born. This includes whether the mother delivered on the enroute to a place, in a hospital, a home, in the field or any other place. It may also include the town in which the child was born.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Chamunshila	‘on the road’ i.e. born on the way	Lenje
Chapanjira	‘of the road or journey’	Chewa
Chivunda	‘a child born in the bush’	Luvale
Hanzila	‘road, path, way’	Tonga
Jila	‘on the way, child born while on transit’	Luvale
Kamwendo	‘small foot, traveller’ born when parents were on a journey	Chewa, Tumbuka
Malekano	‘a place of parting’	Bemba
Masala	‘site of an old village’	Bemba
Musumba	‘city’	Lunda
Namukolo	‘born in a canoe’	Lozi
Nzila	‘road, path, way’	Tonga
Pondala	‘boundary’	Lunda
Wamundila	‘born <i>en route</i> ’	Lozi

PLACE OF ORIGIN OR RESIDENCE

This includes the place where the parents or child came from or where they live. In some cases, parents relocated to seek refuge or run away from problems, witchcraft or rejection.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Hagogwe	‘Gogwe is a name of a township in Zimbabwe’	Tonga
Imboela	‘southerner’	Lozi
Kabimba	‘a village name’	?
Katongo	‘place of residence’	Lozi
Lubemba	‘land directly under the Chitimukulu’	Bemba
Luvweyi	‘an area in Angola; name from River Luvweji’	Luvale
Malawo	‘new village/home’	Tonga

Masonde	‘an area in Luwingu District’	Bemba
Mbulakwao	‘without home, unknown’	Tumbuka
Ngundu	‘deserted village’	Luvale
Sahandu	‘peaceful village’	Lunda
Sameta	‘name of a Lunda village in Mwinilunga’	Lunda
Silutongwe	‘abandoned place of residence’	Lungu, Namwanga
Sunzu	‘a village name; name of a mountain’	Bemba, Mambwe
Tetamashimba	‘a village name’	Luvale
Tizibane	‘let’s get to know each other’	Chewa, Tumbuka

UNFORTUNATE EVENT

Sometimes children were born when parents were confronted with numerous challenges including deaths of relatives or in the community, divorce, persecution, or abject poverty.

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Buumba	‘sorrow’	Tonga
Chandiona	‘you have seen spectacles’	Chewa, Ngoni
Chifundo	‘sympathy, to feel sorrowful or sympathetic’	Tumbuka
Kanyanga	given when mother dies at birth	Luchazi
Kasemuka	‘the mother of the child dies after giving birth’	Luvale
Kushupa	‘difficult’ born under difficulty	Bemba
Kyapusa	‘born after someone’s death’	Kaonde
Luyinda	‘born after something bad has happened’	Luvale
Mambepa	‘liar’ baby preceded by dying children	Bemba, Mambwe
Mwendalubi	‘bad luck’	Tonga, Lenje, Soli
Nalishebo	‘born during famine’	Lozi
Sabooyi	‘born under bad circumstances’	Lozi

BODY PARTS

“... The human body is a microcosm of the universethe body is regarded as a sort of symbolic template for the communication of *gnosis*, mystical knowledge about the nature of things and how they came to be what they are.” Turner further states that body parts may represent concepts such as reason, passion, wisdom, etcetra, or different parts of the social order. Aspects of the human physiology are used as expressions of social, cosmic and religious ideas. In addition, various developmental stages of human life (child, mature adult, and elder) are represented to emphasise the concepts being represented.⁴⁰

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Hamakumbwi	‘big cheeks’	Tonga
Kalezulezu	‘chin’	Chewa, Tumbuka
Kapuputwa	‘blind person’	Luvale
Kijoma	‘a thigh’	Kaonde
Litwai	‘crippled person’	Lunda
Mafupa	‘bones’	Bemba
Makasa	‘feet’	Bemba
Matelu	‘eyes’	Lunda
Matwi	‘ears’	Lozi, Bemba
Mubanga	‘jaw’	Kaonde
Sialubala	‘bald-headed man’	Tonga
Sifuba	‘bone or chest or lung’	Lozi

⁴⁰ Turner, *The Forest of Symbols*, 107.

IMPAIRMENT, DISABILITY, HANDICAP

The presence of names depicting the condition of a disability may be a clear indication of labeling of persons with disability. There is a possibility that identification of persons with disabilities in a traditional society may have been coupled with either ridicule on one hand or sympathy and empathy on the other. The earlier argument may further be strengthened by the reasoning behind the names *Akaayalwa* (Lozi) and *Mukasange* (Tumbuka) in a Tumbuka community, where parents of a child with a disability were teased. The use of the prefix *chi-* in the Luvale name *Chiyanga* and the Bemba name *Chilema* also denotes a derogatory attitude toward disabled persons. This is a similar attitude to that portrayed by *Si-* in Sianga (Lozi). However, *Kaayalwa* (Lozi) shows parental acceptance of the disability. Chitimukulu Chileshe Chepela was almost dumped by his mother when he was born without fingers on one hand but Mwimba Nsangwa cautioned her not to throw him away and offered to look after him saying “We can’t choose a baby, indeed; we choose kaffir corn” The one who briefly succeeded him before Chitapankwa, Bwembya, had speech problems and mental impairment.⁴¹

Saywa ‘carving’

pr. Saywa Nyambe kasikaywa munu

lit. What the god carves cannot be carved by man

int. *even a deformed child is a divine creation for which the parents must thank god*

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Akaayalwa (variant: Akayalwa)	‘one who cannot be looked at, i.e. an ugly one	Lozi
Chilema	‘a crippled person’	Bemba
Chiyanga	‘disabled person’	Luvale
Hadiimana	‘bent, lame’	Tonga
Hichilema	‘parent of a disabled child’	Tonga
Kaamona (dialectic variant: Kamona)	‘far-sighted one’	Lozi
Kaimoyo	‘one who doesn’t know life’ int. invalid	Lozi
Kapuputwa	‘blind person’	Luvale
Kaayalwa	‘one who can’t be looked at’ i.e. said of a child born with some physical defects but whom the parents accept as a godsend	Lozi
Lemana	‘crippled’	Kaonde
Litwai	‘crippled person’	Lunda
Mpofu	‘blind person’	Bemba

⁴¹ Andrew D. Roberts, *A History of the Bemba: Political Growth and Change in North-Eastern Zambia Before 1900* (London: Longman, 1973); John J. Grotpeter, Brian V. Siegel, and James R. Pletcher, *Historical Dictionary of Zambia*, ed. John Woronoff, African Historical Dictionaries 19 (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1998), 51.

Mukasange 'you will find it, you will encounter misfortune' i.e. baby whose parents were laughed at or teased because they encountered adversity or one of them has a disability Tumbuka

Sianga 'cripple'

Lozi

NAMES FROM THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

As the rest of the world intensifies campaigns in the advent of ‘going green’, it follows that this part of the world has always been green and may be ideal for playing a leading role. However, this may not be the case in a couple of decades to come as Gilbert Mudenda and other scholars and researchers argued at a fora on rural development hosted by the Zambia Open University that there may be no villages in Zambia in the near future. This would be attributed to the prevailing “uncontrolled” sale of large chunks of customary land to foreigners, which would eventually leave some traditional leaders powerless.⁴² Names from the natural environment historically represent fair balance in the ecology and account for a fairly large percentage of personal names. Additionally, Mwizenge S. Tembo observed that names, for example Siluwe ‘leopard’ i.e. ‘one that has been mauled by a leopard’ (Tonga), may be a library of our contemporary history⁴³ as many people are no longer living with animals.

NAMES FROM THE ANIMAL KINGDOM

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Bombwe	‘frog’	Kaonde
Ingombe	‘cow’	Lozi
Kakoba	‘a white bird with long legs’	Chewa, Tumbuka
Kasambi	‘chicken’	Luvale
Kombe	‘a kind of large green fly’	Lamba, Bemba
Lembalemba	‘a kind of spider’	Kaonde, Bemba
Luo	‘frog’	Bemba
Luunga	‘a bird of prey’	Tonga
Mbao	‘otter’	Bemba, Lozi
Moono	‘cow’	Tonga
Mpala	‘a kind of antelope; the impala’	Bemba
Ndumba	‘lion’	Lunda, Luvale
Ngandu	‘crocodile’	Lozi, Bemba, Luvale
Nguvu	‘hippopotamus’	Lunda
Njamba	‘elephant’	Luvale, Chokwe
Sikatana	‘old worthless animal skin’	Lozi

⁴² Gilbert Mudenda. “Rural Development in Zambia,” A Discussion Presented at the Taj Pamodzi Hotel by Zambia Open University. Lusaka. 20 September 2013

⁴³ Mwizenge Tembo, *Zambian Traditional Names: The Meaning of Tumbuka, Chewa, Nsenga, Ngoni, and Tonga Names* (Julubbi Enterprises Limited, 2006), 128.

NAMES FROM THE PLANT KINGDOM

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Hamundyoli	'a type of <i>delele</i> , a Zambian vegetable'	Tonga
Kabiki	'cabbage'	Kaonde
Kabilibili	'plush green grass and vegetation'	Chewa
Katayi	'small calabash'	Lunda
Katepa	'small leaf'	Lunda
Likilenge	'vegetable populally known as <i>bondwe</i> '	Luvale
Lozgho	'fresh beans'	Tumbuka
Miyombo	'name of a tree'	Tumbuka, Lunda
Mumena	'a germinating plant'	Kaonde
Mususu	'remaining part after the banana fruit has been removed'	Lunda
Mutubila	'a whitish millet'	Bemba
Mwange	'a type of grass used for thatching'	Lozi
Mwepu	'a type of cucumber that is used to make stringy bathing sponge'	Bemba, Kaonde
Nkhama	'red ochre'	Tumbuka
Sikasukwe	' <i>masuku</i> – a Zambian wild fruit'	Tonga

NAMES FROM OTHER NATURAL PHENOMENA

Name	Description/meaning/cultural significance	Language(s)
Change	'drought'	Luvale
Chipanta	'a dry spell in the rainy season'	Bemba
Chibvwati	'a thick bunch of isolated leaves'	Tumbuka
Chivunda	'thicket/jungle'	Lunda
Liyungu	'wilderness/forest'	Lozi
Meya	'water'	Luvale
Miyoba	'continuous rain'	Tonga
Mujinanga	'a stream'	Luvale
Mulilo	'fire'	Lozi, Bemba
Mulonga	'a stream'	Bemba, Kaonde
Mungwa	'salt'	Luvale
Mutumba	'mountain'	Kaonde

A *bird's eye view* knowledge of the environment in which the above names occur enhances our understanding of the general Zambian linguistic and cultural landscape. Despite the multiplicity of ethnolinguistic groups in Zambia, studying names in their cultural setting illuminates myriads of similarities among them. This is, however, far from being an attempt to oversimplify the unique practices among the seventy three ethnic languages and dialects and their specific identities.

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