

²²Paul Boone.

²³Interview with J. L. Patterson, Boggy Hollow.

²⁴WPA; Aultman.

²⁵Interview with D. Verlin Whiddon, Oloh.

²⁶Jack Alan Smith, "A Study of Place-Names in Forrest County, Mississippi," Diss. Auburn 1969, p. 145.

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**Children's Games of the Shangana-Tsonga,
and Their Accompanying Songs**

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The Shangana-Tsonga are a Bantu-speaking group numbering about 900,000 in the Northern Transvaal, and 1,500,000 in Mozambique. They are patrilineal, virilocal, ancestor-worshipping people who keep some cattle and plant maize. I spent two years with the tribe, under a grant from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

Tsonga children's games and the accompanying songs are a highly conservative element within Tsonga folklore; their performance is stressed by tribal elders as a means of affirming tribal identity following the great westward migration of the last century. This is the surface explanation for present-day performance. There is, however, a deeper, structural explanation for this type of folklore emphasis among the young, and that is the teaching of Tsonga cultural values and worldview to a generation subject to the strongest acculturative forces in tribal history, and the validation of ancient mythological beliefs, traditional taboos, and other elements of the cultural heritage threatened by social change. This social change increasingly erodes the authority of the older generation. Tsonga folklore emphasis is thus a form of stress reaction.

The following brief examination of Tsonga children's games and the accompanying songs reveal the cultural emphasis placed upon wealth in the form of possessing many children. Children were once thought to be frequently stolen by lions, hyenas, or witches. This explanation was frequently given to account for the prevalence of sterility in newly wedded young women, and the familial disgrace which they attempted to

avoid by having their menfolk kidnap a child from a distant community. The "lions," "hyenas," or "witches" were the logical scapegoats of a society where witchcraft was behind every misfortune.

Some of the games and songs remind the children of important tribal food taboos. At betrothal time a suitor may not eat fowl which scatters the soil, for the marriage partners might be scattered. Tsonga explanations of fateful events are often conveyed by analogy. Some of the games and songs reveal past ecology of the region, in their mention of lions and other wild creatures no longer found in Tsonga territory. Some reveal methods of childrearing and behavior control, with their sung threats of being carried off by monsters; others mention historical events such as the Year of the Great Famine (1875). Still others reveal Tsonga proclivity for improvisation on the text, with comical introduction of topical lines referring to unceasing rains, or to having to wait for an inordinate period of time at the rural clinic for treatment.

Tsonga children's games are somewhat seasonal, for during the rains in their mountainous Bantustan the slopes are too slippery for many games. Other games are related to vocation; herdboys' games are not played after the cattle come down to graze on the freshly harvested maize stalks following the May harvest.

An ancient game still played by Tsonga girls is called *ntshengu-ntshengu*. Here is the singing which occurs.

Ntshengu-Ntshengu!

Hi-yo vana vanga, hi-yo manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Hi-yo vana vanga, hi-yo manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Va nga hela hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Hi tinghala hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Na timhisi hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Vana vanga hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Hi tinghala hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 No timhisi, hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!
 Na tinghala hi-yo, manani ntshengu-ntshengu!

Ntshengu-Ntshengu!

O my children, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 O my children, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 O they are finished, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 By the lions, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 By the hyenas, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 O my children, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 By the hyenas, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!
 By the lions, O mother! ntshengu-ntshengu!

In the anthropological literature of the 1920's, Junod describes the game thus:

First the *ntshengu-ntshengu*.

A big girl takes the part of the mother and all the little ones hide behind her. She stretches out her arms to protect them against another girl, who is the thief and tries to take the children away. Notwithstanding the mother's efforts, all are taken one by one, and the stealing is done whilst they sing "Yo Mamana! Ntshengu-ntshengu! Ba hela hi xiruva.

The theft of children is associated with lions and hyenas who, however, are thought of as bewitched people. Tsonga divining-bones contain the astragalus of a hyena, and it represents the *valoyi* (evil spirits) because they eat the flesh of stolen children. In Rikatla, Mozambique, a man named Bebuza had his nose "torn off by a hyena," who demanded "Open the door and give me fire!" Bushmen, in order to save themselves, used to throw their children to the lions (W. Bleek, in *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*), and in the same publication appears the following song:

The old she-hyena
 Was carrying off
 The old woman from the hut

In a Ronga tale preserved by Henri Junod, the mother, "promises her new baby to a lion," and Eileen Krige reports that "when Zulu children cry, they are sometimes silenced by being told they will be carried off by the *Isithwalangengece*. This animal is like a hyena."

Ke Didimo, Ke Ja Banal

Call: Hop! Ke didimo
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: Ke ja bana
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: A ke tshabe
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: Hop! Ke didimo
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: Ke didimo
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: Ke ja bana
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: A ke tshabe
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!
 Call: Hop! Ke didimo
 Response: Mee! Mee! Mee!

I'm a Thief, I Eat Children!

Call: Hop! I'm a thief
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: I eat children
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: I'm ferocious
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: Hop! I'm a thief
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: I'm a thief
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: I eat children
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: I'm ferocious
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!
 Call: Hop! I'm a thief
 Response: Mother! Mother! Mother!

This song accompanies a Tsonga children's game called *mee-mee-mee*. One singer pretends ferociously to eat another child, while the chorus sing *mee-mee-mee*, a term which means a lamb's bleat, but which also translates as "mother."

Yiva-Yiva-Yiva!

- Call: A yiva-yiva-yiva!
 Response: A n'ta yiva n'wana
 Call: A yiva-yiva-yiva!
 Response: A n'ta yiva n'wana
 Kwhiri ra ku fanela hi nchumu
 A n'ta yiva n'wana

Steal, Steal, Steal!

- Call: Steal, steal, steal!
 Response: I would steal a child
 Call: Steal, Steal, steal!
 Response: I would steal a child
 The womb is most blessed
 When it produces children

Yiva, meaning both "to steal" and "to sway," is intended as a double entendre, and the children's game using this song involves a unison swaying motion from leg to leg while the thief takes each child. The final statement of this song-text is related to the following Tsonga proverb:

Ku valeka vukosi
 K'ambala mavala

To bear children is wealth
 To buy dresses is only color

The reference to dresses perhaps comes from the dilemma faced by pregnant mothers-to-be who wish to maintain their appearance—extra material is needed. Another Tsonga proverb contains a similar reference:

Ku veleka
 Ku luka mano

To bear children
 Is to weave cunningly

The following song traditionally accompanies a children's game called *Mbita ya vulombe ya rheka-rheka*:

Mbita Ya Vulome

Call: Mbita ya vulombe
 Response: Ya rheka-rheka
 Call: Mbita ya vulombe
 Response: Y rheka-rheka

The Pot of Honey

Call: The pot of honey
 Response: It quivers like jelly
 Call: The pot of honey
 Response: It quivers like jelly

Henri Junod describes this ancient Tsonga game in his *The Life of a South African Tribe*:

Mbita ya vulombe ya reka-reka.

The children face each other in two rows and clasp hands. One of them lays himself on their arms, and all swing him, singing the same song.

Mbita Ya Vulombe

Call: Hee Xikelewa
 Response: Hee!
 Call: A ka n'wina mi dya yini?
 Response: Hi dya maxalani
 Call: Na yini kambe
 Response: Na n'wakwa
 Call: Tihuku-ke?
 Response: Ti dya vusokoti
 Call: Tinhlampfi-ke?
 Response: Ti dya vulombe
 Call: Ha honisa?
 Response: Honisani
 Call: Ha khoma?
 Response: Khomani
 Call: Mbita ya vulombe
 Response: Ya reka-reka

The Honey Pitcher

- Call: Hey! Xikelewa!
 Response: Hey!
 Call: On what do you dine at home?
 Response: We dine on sorghum
 Call: And what else?
 Response: And the kwakwa fruit
 Call: What about your fowls?
 Response: They devour ants
 Call: What about fish?
 Response: They eat honey
 Call: Do we ignore?
 Response: Ignore ye!
 Call: Do we catch?
 Response: Catch ye!
 Call: The honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs
 Call: The honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs

This is a regional variation of the same song, and it manifests itself in the form of short questions and answers. *Xikelewa* may be from the English word sickle, in which case it might be translated as "little harvester." The "little harvesters" are being given a quiz on certain Tsonga food taboos. For instance, upon betrothal a suitor may not eat fowl because fowls scratch for ants — the scattering of the soil would scatter the marriage. For the same reason he may not eat fish or honey — they are both slippery. The singers' reference to honey-eating fish indicates familiarity with the *mbonga* bee, which nests underground over subterranean pools, where fish are believed to eat its honey. The exclamation "Honisa!" is translated by Cuenod as "a phrase used in a game of children, in which they catch one another and use the phrases *Ha honisa*, we let you pass, and *Honisani*, let us pass."

Mbita Ya Vulombe

- Call: Mbita ya vulome
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Mbita ya vulombe
 Response: Ya reka-reka!

Call: Ho nela hi mpfula
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Hi ri xibedela
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Hi ndhava ya vuvabyi
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Hi mbita ya vulombe
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Mpfula ya nyan 'waka
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Yi dlele mavele
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Ho hlupheka
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Hayi mbita ya vulombe leyi
 Response: Ya reka-reka!
 Call: Mi nhlupheka ya nyan 'waka leyi
 Response: Ya reka-reka!

The Honey Pitcher

Call: The honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: The honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: Rain is pouring on us
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: We're at the hospital
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: Because of sickness
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: The honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: The heavy rain of this year
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: Has beaten down our corn
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: We suffer so
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: No! This honey pitcher
 Response: How it stirs!
 Call: It is the year of suffering
 Response: How it stirs!

An adaptation of *Mbita Ya Vulombe* which conveys topical messages, this version was sung by fifty inmates of a long, low wooden hut at Elim Hospital. The hut was a temporary structure provided solely for the purpose of housing visiting relatives of the sick, and during the unusually heavy rains of *March, 1969, it was a damp and cold place to be. Hupheka* is Zulu for "suffering," and the Tsonga, who frequently employ Zulu terms, often refer to a "year of suffering" in memory of the famine of 1875. During that year, legal documents listed at least one case of Ronga cannibalism. In 1897 Henri Junod published a Ba-Ronga folktale which he entitled "L'annee de la famine."

Xifufununu!

- Call: Xifufununu!
 Response: Xi rhwele, xi na masingita, xi rhwele
 Call: Xifufununu!
 Response: Xi rhwele, xi na masingita, xi rhwele
 Call: Xifufununu!
 Response: Xi rhwele, xi na masingita, xi rhwele

The Beetle!

- Call: Beetle!
 Response: It carries wonderful things on its back
 Call: Beetle!
 Response: It carries wonderful things on its back
 Call: Beetle!
 Response: It carries wonderful things on its back

Six versions of this song were recorded, attesting to its popularity. It occurs in a children's game entitled *Xifufununu xa paripari*, which is really the name of a large Tenebrionida beetle, known to beat the ground with its abdomen. Henri Junod described the game thus:

Groups of children play two-by-two. One of the two lies down facing the ground and the other sits on his back, looking forward, to guard the head of the one who is prone. He sings while beating the other's back: *Xifufununu xa paripari ndjuluka hi yetlele!* "Beetle turn up so that we may lie down!"

The phrase *xi rhwele*, reiterated by the chorus, derives from the verb *rhwala*, "to carry on one's head and shoulders." Another beetle song may be found in *Specimens of Bushman Folklore*:

Get out of the way
The beetle is throwing

Xifufununu

Call: Xifufununu xi rhwele, xi na masingita
Response: Xi rhwele!
Call: Xa na ni vona rhwala, xi na masingita
Response: Xi rhwele!
First Solo
Shout: Xifufununu hi miṅa Tsatsawana wa ka Pete
Wa Ka Ngoveni
Ndzisana ya Chief Khamanyana
Second Solo
Shout: Ndzi le hospital ndzi la hi
Ku vabya
Response: Xi rhwele!

The Beetle

Call: The beetle carries wonderful things on its back
Response: It carries them!
Call: When it spies me, it shows me wonderful things on its back
Response: It carries them!
First Solo
Shout: Beetle! I'm Tsatsawana, the daughter of Pete
My surname is Ngoveni
The younger sister of Chief Khamanyana
Second Solo
Shout: I'm at the hospital
Because of my sickness
Response: It carries them!

The above version of *Xifufununu* contains improvised lines, and the singer tells us who she is, her family connections, where she is, and why she is there.

Ho! Bird!

- Call: Ho! Bird! Ho! Bird!
 Response: Hop, Hop, hop!
 Call: Ho! Bird! Ho! Bird!
 Response: Hop, hop, hop!
 Call: Your mother did not hear the song
 Response: Hop, hop, hop!
 Call: Ho! Bird! Ho! Bird!
 Response: Hop, hop, hop!
 Call: Kneel down, kneel down!
 Response: Hop, hop, hop!

This song accompanies a hopping game called *holowane*, which is the name of a species of bird. Henri Junod describes the game thus:

In *tithuba holwane* they take two sides. One opponent comes, hopping like a frog, takes a stick and, still hopping, goes and plants it in his own ground.

No ornithological analogy emerges in the above description, but our song does contain a reference to frog-like hopping, for Cuenod translates *dlamu-dlamu* as "to hop like a frog." (The second line of our song reads *dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani.*)

Makuluku Javajava!

- Call: Vana va nga
 Response: Ha makuluku! Javajava!
 Call: Va nga helo/Hi xinoyani/

Great Alarm!

- Call: My children
 Response: Great alarm!
 Call: Have been finished/By the witches/

In this game a "wild dog" tries to catch baby "duikers." One child is the dog, another is the mother duiker, and the rest are baby duikers standing with hands on hip in a line behind their mother's outstretched arms. The dog calls "Child! Child!" and

Xifufununu, Vuka, Vuka!

Solo: N'wana manani
 Ni na makwavo
 Ni na makwavo xifufununu
 Ni na makwavo, ni na makwavo
 Xifufununu ni na makwavo
 Xifufununu ni na makwavo
 Ni na makwavo
 Vuka, vuka
 Ntende!

Beetle, Wake Up, Wake Up!

Solo: Child-of-my-mother
 I have a brother
 I have a brother beetle
 I have a brother, I have a brother
 Beetle brother
 Beetle brother
 I have a brother
 Wake up, wake up
 Arise!

This song is a regional variation of *Xifufununu*, and the exclamation *vuka* not only means "wake up," but Cuenod gives the meaning "to return to easiness after a time of hardship," — a meaning which might refer to the sat-upon child's taking his turn at riding.

Hoi Xinyenyana!

Call: Ho! Xinyenyana! Xinyenyana!
 Response: Ho dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani!
 Call: Ho! Xinyenyana! Ho! Xinyenyana!
 Response: Ho dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani!
 Call: He manana a nga yi twanga ngoma
 Response: Ho dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani!
 Call: Ho xinyenyana, ho xinyenyani!
 Response: Ho dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani!
 Call: A vo khindzi, a vo khindzi!
 Response: Ho dlamulani, dlamulani, dlamulani!

the babies commence jumping in time to the rhythm of the song. Anyone caught become the dog's child.

The singers merely singing about the "chasing" procedures involved in this game, but their reference to "being finished by the witches" is based upon very strong Tsonga fears. Guye cites the case of a child being named Nyambu ("their meat") because his brothers had all been eaten by the wizards.

Hamaxuxu Mbanga-mbanga Mangongori!

- Shout: Mbale-mbale!
 Solo song: Haxaxuxu mbanga-mbanga mangongori
 Mangongori ya vo
 Swi rileka n'winake
 Swi ri mi dya yinike?
 Swi ri me dya xalani
 Hoyaya hoke cinani swene vana
 Vhumani swinene kondla!

Somebody Else's Turn!

- Shout: Mbale-mbale!
 Solo song: Somebody else's turn!
 Turns, *ya vo*
 They are crying for you
 They say what do you eat?
 They say you eat sorghum
 Dance hard, children
 Answer hard!

This is a leg-counting song for Tsonga children, but it is also found among the neighboring Venda in several borrowed versions. The game and its song teach counting as the singers sit in a row upon the ground; it also goes through the Tsonga diet as it lists maize, pumpkin, ground nuts, sugar cane, and other products of Tsonga horticulture.

The call-and-response structure of most Tsonga children's games and the accompanying songs ensures that performance is generally an organized, structured social act, with a leader, chorus, and unison adherence to the prescribed songtext and its rhythm. In some cases a little dance must be performed. African dance always obeys the metrical dictates of its accompanying music. Performance thus teaches certain basic

principles of the Tsonga musical system. Each game song, for instance, possesses its own fixed metrical length, its own pulse-divisions or rhythm within that length, and a melodic contour which, in the case of Tsonga children's songs, invariably descends through a series of pitch plateaus.

Other Tsonga musical principles absorbed via performance of these games and songs are worth comment. All children's songs exhibit a preference for the intervals of the descending major second, descending minor third, and ascending major second. All utilize exclusively pentatonic melodic patterns. Most exhibit the limited vocal range of a 4th or 5th. Most possess either an 8-unit or 16-unit overall cycle which repeats.

The step-by-step melodies, short 5-note patterns, simple metrical structure, and avoidance of harmonic and rhythmic complicating factors, indicate that these songs are a distinct and homogeneous stage within the larger Tsonga musical configuration. Present-day emphasis upon their frequent performance is a means of introduction to adult music, with its important traditional ritual implications.

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Alchemy and Transformation in the Ballad "Tam Lin"

Julian Wasserman

One of the most curious of the recurrent figures in the popular ballads of both England and Scotland is that of the enchanted "shape shifter," the Proteus-like creature whose ability to alter his physical form is frequently used to test the wits and tenacity of unsuspecting mortals. Remarkably, these seemingly unromantic figures, who have the propensity for changing into the creatures most frequently associated with the familiars of witches, appear to play an unusually prominent role in the ballads that recount the winning of a member of the faery world as a mate for a mortal sweetheart. Perhaps the answer to this seeming contradiction lies in the suitability of such a figure as a ready metaphor for the mysterious process of the ever-changeable human heart. Accordingly, one of the most interesting examples of this motif is to be found in the popular Scottish ballad, "Tam Lin,"¹ in which a younger daughter of a Scottish laird journeys to Mile's Cross at midnight in order to free her phantom lover from the spell of the Elf Queen. She accomplishes this task by pulling her lover down from his horse and holding him in her arms while he undergoes a series of startling transformations designed to make her loosen her grip on the knight whom she would ransom from the world of the fay.

In the Johnson's Museum manuscript, thought by Child to contain the least corrupted account of the series of transformations,² Tam Lin tells Janet

My right hand will be gloved, lady,
My left hand will be bare,
Cockt up shall my bonnet be,