



## Gourd-Bow Music of the Tsonga

by Thomas F. Johnston

This study of Tsonga gourd-bow music was carried out in Mozambique and the Northern Transvaal, by residing during the period 1968-1970 with Tsonga players of the instrument, and learning from them. The field work was funded by the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

The *xitende* braced gourd-bow is the earliest-mentioned stringed instrument of the Tsonga, having been described in 1897 by Junod (Junod 1897:22). A 'kaffir' braced gourd-bow was described by a Jesuit priest in 1723 (Bonanni 1723:175), - this may have belonged to the Tsonga rather than to the Zulu, Swazi, or any other Southern African coastal group, for Rycroft states that the *umakhweyana* braced gourd-bow of the Zulu and Swazi "was reputedly borrowed from the Tsonga of Mozambique in the nineteenth century" (Rycroft 1967: 96). The Venda *dende* (Blacking 1967:27), the Pedi *sekgapa* (Huskisson 1958:71), and the Chopi *tshitendole* (Kirby 1965:205) have been described by recent investigators and, going north from Southern Africa, we note that the Zambian Tonga call it *kalumbu* (Rycroft 1954:16), the Kenyan Mtembe call it *ntono* (Hyslop 1959: 24), and that it appears in Zaire under the names of *dumba*, *gedo*, *wangoloko*, and *andobu* (Laurenty 1960:14).

The Tsonga *xitende* is a five-foot bow cut from the *maloha* tree, and its copper-wire string, *ritsaninga*, is divided by a movable wire-loop to which is attached a calabash called *xiphaphani*. The string sections are tuned a minor 3rd apart and struck with a maize stalk called *rihlangi*, the player additionally opening and closing the calabash against his preferably bare chest. The tuning is accomplished by twisting the knotted ends of the wire-loop within the interior of the calabash, and by sliding the wire loop and calabash up or down the bow as required, these two actions being known as *ku gwimba*.

The following *xitende* gourd-bow pieces were performed by Joseph Mageza of Elim, in the Northern Transvaal. He is well-known locally as a fine maker of musical instruments. On his own *xitende* he has attached a row of rattles which reverberate in sympathy with the



string, and a metal resonator in the form of a discarded dustpan. He values his instrument highly and would not sell it at any price.

*Xitende* Transcription 1. *Whayayiso Ka Mhane* (at Mother's in Whayayiso)

♩ = 280

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up

Cycle: 20 ♩

The musical score for 'Whayayiso Ka Mhane' consists of five staves. The top staff is for the *xitende* instrument, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. It begins with a 20-measure introduction. The second and third staves are for women's voices, with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a '20' measure marker. The lyrics 'Wha-ya-yi-so-o ka mha-ne' are written below the notes. The fourth staff is for a bass voice, with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It has a '20' measure marker and the lyrics 'Wha-ya-yi-so-o' and 'Jo-ni!'. The fifth staff is for the *xitende* accompaniment, with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. It has a '20' measure marker. A box labeled 'bass voice of player' is placed over the fourth staff.

Mageza exploits the percussive and rhythmic possibilities of his instrument by arranging the 20-quaver pattern of the above piece in various groupings. The instrumental introduction intimates some of these rhythmic variations, and when the voices enter with the pattern 3+3+2+2, Mageza creates polyrhythm by playing 2+3+2+3 against it. Only open tones are used in the accompaniment, and the pentatonic vocal melody is mainly in 4ths, 5ths, and 8ves with them.

*Xitende* Transcription 2. *Vanhu Va Kona Va Na Nsele*

(Jealousy, It's the Witches) Women singers plus *xitende*

♩ = 390

Transpos.: min 6th up

Cycle: 32 ♩

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system features a treble clef with a whole rest and a bass clef with a 'Lui Oye' (basso) line. The second system shows a vocal line for 'women' with lyrics 'Va-nhu va kc-na va na nse-le' and a corresponding bass line. The third system shows another vocal line for 'women' with lyrics 'tshanga ra ko-na ri lu- ngi-le wa vu-lo-yi' and a corresponding bass line.

In the above piece, Mageza's duple-stressed opening bar serves to heighten the rhythmic interest of the 3+3+2 which follows. The latter rhythm is typically African, and it occurs in a Zulu bow piece given by Rycroft (Rycroft 1967:98), a Bushman clap given by England (England 1967:64), an Akan rhythm given by Nketia (Nketia 1962:76), and an Alomwe motor-pattern given by Kubik (Kubik 1965:42).

*Xitende* Transcription 3. *Mhani Yo Ndzi Rhurha* (Mother, I'm Going Away)

♩ = 153

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle: 8 ♩ (bimetric)

The musical score for 'Xitende' Transcription 3 shows a treble clef with a whole rest and a bass clef with a 'Lui Oye' (basso) line.



Women's vocal line: *Mha-ni yo ndz'r'hu-r'ha yo Gi-ant Ri-va-va*

Gourd-bow accompaniment: *Mha-ni yo ndz'r'hu-r'ha yo Gi-ant Ri-va-va*

The above piece has a vocal melody containing 12 pulses against an instrumental accompaniment containing 16 pulses. This is a well-known African bimetric formula in which contrasting rhythms provide interest and excitement through the tension they set up. Note that Mageza's fingered A's extend the instrumental range from a minor 3rd to a 5th. "Giant Rivaa" in the songtext is the name of an old goldmine in the Spelonken district; it has been closed and reopened several times. Its real name is Giant Reef, but the Tsonga have confused the term and call it Giant River.

*Xitende* Transcription 4. *Khumbula Rosie Kaya* (Think Back, Rosie, On Your Home)

♩. = 116 Women singer plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle: 16 ♩.

Women's vocal line: *ya ha-ya he ya la-ya n'waMula mu-le-le*

Gourd-bow accompaniment: *va ho-wa ho-vo wa ho-ve-le-le*

Annotations: "bass voice of player" and "1st time" / "other time" with arrows pointing to specific notes.

Women's vocal line: *khumbul Rosie ka-ya le n'waMala-mu-le-le n'waMala-mu-le-le*

Gourd-bow accompaniment: *ho-o-wa-le-le*

In this piece a group of women sing a chorus above Mageza's melody, in the traditional call-and-response style. Both vocal parts show overall descent from first note to last; this is characteristic of all Tsonga melodies, as is the opposed groupings of two's and three's, producing polyrhythm. Tsonga vocal music also possesses a system of harmonic substitution, whereby notes a fifth apart are regarded as equivalent. The downward transposition of Mageza's first note D, to a G the second time, reflects this rule.

*Xitende* Transcription 5. *N'wana Wa Mina, Sala Hi Rila* (My Child, We Remain Behind Mourning For You)

♩. = 158 Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle: 16 ♩.

Women's vocal line: *n'wa-na wa mi-na sa-la we hi ri-la kho-ombo ra mi-na sa-la we hi ri-la*

Gourd-bow accompaniment: *sa-la we hi ri-la kho-ombo ra mi-na sa-la we hi ri-la*



This is a mourning song for deceased children. Infant mortality is high among the rural Tsonga. "My Child, We Remain Behind Mourning For You" is sung at a formal beer-drink after burial in a broken clay pot. Just as some Tsonga pots do not survive the firing process, but crack, a dead infant is called *ngele-ngele* (the sound a rolling pot makes) and returned to the earth from whence it came, in a broken vessel. The pot is half-covered with ashes, and the father is prohibited from participation in the ceremony.

*Xitende* Transcription 6. *Madyela Ndlwini Ku Dya Ku Tsonana* (They Eat Well and Give Nothing)

♩. = 82

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle: 18 ♩.

musical score for *Xitende* Transcription 6. The score is in two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line for "woman, solo" and a gourd-bow line. The vocal line has lyrics: "Va-Nya-ni-so-ro ma-fula-khwi-ri ma-dye-la n-dlul-ni ku dya ku tso-na-na". The gourd-bow line is labeled "col" and "basso". The second system also has a vocal line and a gourd-bow line. The vocal line has lyrics: "va tat' ma-khwi-ri ha vu ma-ma-za ma-dye-la n-dlul-ni". The gourd-bow line is labeled "col" and "basso".

*Xitende* Transcription 7. *Ye Kwih Ximanimani?* (Where Have You Been, Pretty One?)

♩ = 178

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle 16 ♩

musical score for *Xitende* Transcription 7. The score is in two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line for "bass voice" and a gourd-bow line. The vocal line has lyrics: "An-ge-li-na ye kwi-hi xi-ma-ni-man". The gourd-bow line is labeled "col" and "basso". The second system also has a vocal line and a gourd-bow line. The vocal line has lyrics: "ye kwi-hi xi-ma-ni-ma-ni An-ge-". The gourd-bow line is labeled "col" and "basso".

Among the Tsonga, songs of censure are a form of social control. By being sung in public and addressed to certain unnamed individuals, they serve to regulate behavior; everyone present knows to whom they refer.

In "They Eat Well and Give Nothing," there is strong criticism of a kin-group which retains its harvest surplus instead of sharing, hoards the products of the garden in storage huts instead of distributing some among the less fortunate, and neglects to pay the customary tribute to the local headman. The first five bars are sung solo by the cantor, and the chorus of women answers in the sixth bar. While the chorus text remains the same with each repeat, the cantor will vary her call by inserting spontaneously improvised topical references. The *xitemde* bow provides the rhythmic underpinning.

In "Where Have You Been, Pretty One," there is criticism of a young unmarried woman who has been outside the kraal late at night, probably visiting a young man's hut. Social criticism which might rupture relations, or severely strain interpersonal cooperation if spoken directly, is muted by being put into song, with no naming of the culprit. The latter saves face by listening to the criticism and amending the offending behavior. Conflict is thereby minimized.

In both pieces, the *xitemde* bow moves mainly in octaves, fifths, and fourths with the vocal line, and embroiders the pulse.

*Xitemde* Transcription 8. *Dyana Nta Ku Lamulele* (Eat, Bird, I will Protect You)

♩ = 170

Women singers plus *xitemde*

Transpos.: min 6th up Cycle: 36 ♩



women  
Dya-

col 8ve  
basso

bass voice of player  
na-a dyanadyana he madlayi-sa-ni xi-nye-nya-na dya-

women  
Dya-

na nta ku lamulele dlayisa-ni xi-nye-nya-na dya-

36

36

divide  
na-a dya-na he na dlayi-san xi-nye-nya-na dya-  
na

bass voice of player  
na-a dya-na dya-

DS

Legendary animal and bird figures abound in Tsonga folklore, and are often humanized. Such figures are sometimes thought to be reincarnations, sometimes thought to be bewitched persons. Ill-treat-

ment of an animal or bird may bring later repercussions in the form of vengeance, such as a curse. Much illness among the Tsonga is attributed to this.

In the music, note how the *xitende* note values commence long, change to short fast notes, then increase in value even more than initially. This is common in Tsonga music, and lends impetus and momentum. The song has a long 36-pulse cycle, and repeats a number of times with variations.

The bow, the male voice, and the female voices all contribute color to the music, which often reflects the social situation, the context and milieu in which the music occurs. This was sung at a social beer-drink, where there is a special joking relationship between a married man and the womenfolk among his in-laws.



The wandering *xitende* minstrels of Tsongaland train young apprentices, who learn by repeating verbal nonsense syllables, rhythmically. Here one repairs his damaged bow.



*Xitende* Transcription 9. *Tinguvu Ta Nwa-Mbhanjele Ti Nga Sala*  
(The Clothes of Son-of-Mbhanjele Remained Behind)

♩. = 117

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up

Cycle: 8 ♩.

unacc. bass voice of player

8 Ti-ngu-vu ta n'va-  
Mba- nje-le ti nga sa-la ka xi- ga-lu mha- ne- e kho-  
ma- ni- i swi ti- ya ti-nga sa-la ka xi- ga-lu mha- ne- o

woman  
ti-  
ngu-vu ta n'wa-Mba-

man  
nje- le ti nga sa- la- ke- xi- ga- lu  
mha- ne- a

cel. & bow. basso.

Tsonga *xitende* music often features old songs, the texts of which reveal ancient customs and beliefs. When digging the grave of a deceased person, it is usual to take the clothing of that person and hang it on a tree stump near the grave, to ward off evil spirits which endeavor to afflict the wandering spirit. In this way, easy passage of the deceased along the many difficult stages of the way to the spirit world is facilitated. Hence "The Clothes of Son-of-Mbhanjele Remained Behind."

Xitende Transcription 10. *Mina Ndzi Vona Naxangu* (I Have Seen the Misery)

♩ = 218

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 3rd up      Cycle: 16 ♩

16

vosen

Mina ndzi vo-na sa- xa-ngu he-

col 8ve basso

vosen

he si- na ndzi vo- na sa- xa-ngu he si- na ha-

vosen

bass voice of player

mina ndzi xangu he mina he mina ndzi vna sa- xa-ngu he

A common feature of *xitende* gourd-bow music is the use of pedal notes which remain stationary under moving upper parts, as in the bottom line of this transcription. In the movement between the two vocal parts, harmony follows the rules of a span process: the Tsonga take the notes of an extended pentatonic scale, and allocated voices a variable distance span, in similar motion. The distance may be a 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th, according to the disparate intervals of the Tsonga pentatonic scale. It is this span process which yields the Tsonga concept of harmonic equivalence, where apparently different notes are interchangeable.



Xitende Transcription 11. *Byalwa, Mbambele Se Ndlala Ya Nan'waka Yi Chinge Ngopfu* (Beer, Protect Me From the Terrible Hunger of This Year)

♩ = 192

Transpos.: min 6th up

Women singers plus *xitende*

Cycle: 32 ♩

The musical score consists of five systems, each with a vocal line and a gourd-bow accompaniment line. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 192. The score is transposed a minor 6th up and has a cycle of 32 measures.

**System 1:** The vocal line is labeled "bass voice of player" and includes the lyrics "He-e byalwa mbambelen he bya- lwa mba-mbele- ni ndlala ya na-". The gourd-bow line is labeled "col. 8ve" and "bassy".

**System 2:** The vocal line includes the lyrics "n'wa kay chinge ngo - pfuhe bya- lwa mba- mbe-len".

**System 3:** The vocal line includes the lyrics "he bya-". A box labeled "women" is placed above the staff, and a box labeled "bass voice" is placed below the staff.

**System 4:** The vocal line includes the lyrics "lwa mbambelen! - l abambele se ndla-la na n'wa-ka he bya-". A box labeled "women" is placed above the staff.

**System 5:** The vocal line includes the lyrics "lwa mbambele - ni he bya- lwa mba-mbe-le- ni- ni". A box labeled "bass voice" is placed above the staff.

In the case of the Magadimgele famine of 1875, and the Gonhwen famine of 1895, tens of thousands of Tsonga perished of hunger. A legend has it that all that was left was the fermented maize in the large beer-making cauldrons, and that this saved the lives of many Tsonga. Here this ancient song serves as a memento or historical record of the event in Tsonga history. The Tsonga possess no written records of their past, and it is in song that their heritage is perpetuated and passed on from generation to generation.

In this performance, The *xitende* player first outlines the song, reminding the women singers of the story. Following a brief rhythmic interlude from the *xitende* bow, the chorus of assembled women enter in harmony with the player. Note the unusual (for the Tsonga) homorhythmic aspect of the voices and the instrumental accompaniment.

In the first line of this *xitende* song, *nhambe* translates "an offering of food in ritual." At the Tsonga first fruits ceremony in January an elder must take some of the first beer from the *bukanyi* fruit and pour it over a branch of the tree in propitiation to the harvest spirits prior to distribution for drinking. The *bukanyi* fruit is the size of a large plum, golden yellow in color, and carries a strong odor and flavor of turpentine. This song is performed by the assembly as part of the ritual; failure to sing it or play it correctly may result in a poor harvest the following season.

*Xitende* Transcription 12. *Ha I Ngoma Ya Maganja* (Thi Is the Clown's Song)

♩ = 173

Transpos.: min 3rd up

Women singers plus *xitende*

Cycle: 8 ♩

The image shows a musical transcription for the song 'Ha I Ngoma Ya Maganja'. It consists of two staves. The upper staff is a vocal line for the 'bass voice of player', starting with a treble clef and a 6/8 time signature. The lower staff is an instrumental line for the *xitende*, starting with a bass clef and a 6/8 time signature. The lyrics 'Ha i-ngh'a-a ya ma- ga-' are written below the vocal line. The transcription includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings.



women  
bass voice of player

nja ha i- ngh' a- a ya ma- ga- va landzela va ka Nda- va - a ho ta- tan

bow

women  
player

ha i- ngh' a- a ya ma- ga- nja ya sa- ga- nja ho ta- tan ha i- ngh' a- a ya ma- ga- va landzel va ka Nda- 3x

bow

nja va- a- a ho ta- tan ham va- ingh- aa ya waga- nja va- ku- na- vi- ril Ds

Xitende players are frequently professional entertainers, known as *xilombe*. Such a person clowns at the chief's meeting, even insulting the chief, which is considered to be in excellent humorous taste. Frequently, a young lad with a sharp wit and joking nature, or even a lad with a psychotic disturbance, is guided into the *xilombe* role, thus providing a socially acceptable outlet for behavior outside the range of the norm. Hence "This is the Clown's Song."

Clowning is not the sole function of the *xilombe*. Such a person may wander from community to community carrying news in his songs, and even transmitting complaints from one village to the next. The present writer witnessed a performance where a *xilombe* with his *xitende* bow pointed at the chief and accused him of allowing his cattle to destroy crops across the river, wiping out the resources of the neighboring community. He did this loudly, while jumping up and down, singing all the while. Such an accusation would surely bring retribution if brazenly spoken, but this *xilombe* stood on his musical prerogative and diplomatic immunity. He received beer and food, and a loan of one of the chief's huts for the night, including the

chief's younger wife who resided in it. When he left, he carried with him, in song, a promise of compensation from the chief, which would partially restore the prosperity of the neighboring group.

**Xitende Transcription 13. *Manana Va N'wi Sivela Kaya* (They Block My Mother's Way)**

♩ = 192  
 Transpos.: min 6th up      Women singers plus *xitende*  
 Cycle: 16 ♩

**Xitende Transcription 14. *Yo Sala Wo Ndzi Rila* (Remain Behind and Mourn For Me)**

♩ = 162  
 Transpos.: min 6th up      Women singers plus *xitende*  
 Cycle: 16 ♩



na vena ku ve-re-nga isula-ni le-ka- ya | sa-la wo | ndzi ri-la yu | sal

*DS*

Xitende Transcription 15. *Ahi Yeni Magwamba Guluwela* (Let Us Go, Magwamba Wanderers)

♩ = 190

Women singers plus *xitende*

Transpos.: min 6th up

Cycle: 16 ♩

bass voice of player  
16 A-hi yeni Ma-gwa-ba gu- lu- ve- e la- a- Si-

cul 8ve basso  
16

ba- nye-ni he le-yi

women  
player  
a-hi yeni Ma-gwa- ba (ahi)

women  
hle- e- e lo-o ka hi-na ma- na- a- na

bass voice of player  
lu- ve- e- la- a Si- ba-nye- ni hmm

This *xitende* song mentions part of the Tsonga genesis myth. In the term Magwamba, Gwamba is derived from Gwambe, an early Tsonga progenitor. Gwambe figures in the origin of the Ba-Djonga and Buloyi clan of the Tsonga. The Ba-Djonga say that the world's first male ancestor, Gwambe, brought a glowing cinder in a shell. He gave the Tsonga fire. The Baloyi claim to have come from the north in such large numbers that they opened a wide road — the old road of Gwambe, who came into being by emerging from a reed. The name MaGwamba was first applied to the Tsonga by the Venda, their neighbors in the Northern Transvaal. The Venda were there long before the Tsonga, who are an immigrant group from Mozambique in the east. This migration was caused by invading Zulu in 1835, under the warlords Zwagendaba, Shaka, and Soshangane. It is from the latter warrior that the term Shangana-Tsonga is derived.

These two transcriptions illustrate certain important principles of Tsonga music. In the first (no. 13), we note the alternating 4ths and 5ths between the male and female vocal lines. The contrary motion at "*loyi mina*" is due to the limited range of the bow. The F is transposed upward, and thus is not really contrary motion. In the second (no. 14), overall descending motion is clearly seen, as the melody drops in sawtooth fashion through a series of tonal plateaux to the final D, which is the second from lowest tone in the piece (a common form of ending). Descending major 2nds and minor 3rds are the preferred melodic intervals in Tsonga music, with upward leaps being rare. In Tsonga speech, a sentence commences high and descends, with small adjustments along the way for speech tone and inflection. Tsonga melody generally follows speech tone contour. In fact, Tsonga songwords may be said to be a major generating force in Tsonga musical composition, in the same way that the intrinsic properties of taut bowstrings influence the melodic line produced on a *xitende* gourd-bow. The type of accompaniment figures played on a Tsonga *xitende* bow reflect the division of the bowstring in two uneven lengths, and, of course, the relative tuning of the two halves. Accompanying figures in other tribes are different, because tuning customs vary.

Among the Mtende tribe, the two *xitende* string lengths are commonly tuned a 4th apart. To obtain a major 2nd or a minor 3rd, the longer string length is fingered, placing the additional tone inside the open tones. Among the neighboring Pedi, the two string lengths are tuned a major 2nd apart. To obtain a 4th, the shorter



string length is raised a minor third by fingering, i.e., the method of production of minor 3rds and major 2nds is the reverse of that of the Tsonga.



Wandering *xitende* player takes the path west to next village, carrying news and complaints.

The Tsonga *xitende* is only one of four musical bows in use in the tribe, the others being the *xizambi* notched friction bow, the *xipendana* women's bow (fragile, with thin ends), and the *mqangala* hollow cane bow. The *xitende* is the only Tsonga bow using a gourd resonator, hence it leaves the mouth free and is suited for the shouting and singing of the player. This feature determines the bow's social use. It is the largest bow, with the deepest tone and highest volume. This again supports the antics and exhibitionism of the wandering minstrel player. It is the only bow struck with a stick or reed; bouncing the stick produces fast repeated notes. It is the only Tsonga bow with a tone quality which can be varied: the player lifts the gourd on and off his chest, much as a trombonist inserts and withdraws a wa-wa mute.

In the foregoing pieces, Mageza raises the upper open string of his *xitende*, by fingering the shortest string section. Sometimes he does this by a major 2nd, creating an overall instrumental range of a 4th, and sometimes he does this by a major 3rd, creating an overall instrumental range of a 5th. In two of the pieces Mageza utilizes two fingered tones, raising the upper open tone by a major 2nd and a major 3rd respectively, within the same piece.

Over half of the pieces exhibit a metrical length of 16 units per cycle, and all of them are pentatonic in a Dorian-like tonality (however, the same singers later performed exorcism songs accompanied by drums and leg-rattles, that were heptatonic).

The predominant intervallic structure of Tsonga *xitende* music (not the vocal music) consists of an ascending or descending 4th, containing a minor 3rd. The pentatonic scale upon which Tsonga *xitende*-accompanied singing is based consists of two conjunct such 4ths. Rycroft states of Nguni bow-accompanied singing that "close parallels can be noted between the voice-to-bow relationships in bow-songs" (Rycroft 1967:98), and Kubik considers that much African parallel harmony "is inspired by parallel movement of partial tones, particularly as they appear with the musical bow" (Kubik 1964:52). This relationship merits careful consideration.

It is true that the source of any consistent differences between unaccompanied singing and bow-accompanied singing should be sought in the melodic and rhythmic characteristics of the instrumental accompaniment. However, it is necessary to look beyond the facile explanation of parallel vocal harmony as a derivative of bow music. The easiest intervals for the human voice to execute are the major 2nd and the minor 3rd. Series of these form a common pentatonic scale. Two vocal parts proceeding in parallel motion at a given span apart will yield alternating 4ths and 5ths, plus some 3rds and 6ths. Bow music does not easily yield these 3rds and 6ths, but they are found in Tsonga vocal music. Vocal music among the Tsonga is generally of a social and ritual nature — a beer-drink, an exorcism, an initiation, where large groups of people and officials assemble for important proceedings. The vocal music is thought to possess supernatural power in healing, in bringing rain, in placating spirits. The rules governing vocal music are consistent and take a high priority in Tsonga life. It is more likely that instrumental musical forms will follow vocal musical norms, than vice versa. In all African societies, instrumental practice is probably this: the features



and properties of various instruments are utilized as they reproduce established principles in tribal vocal music. This probably accounts in part for the fact that certain instruments are notably absent in some African societies, while present in others.

The study of gourd-bow music involves both vocal and instrumental music, revealing preferences within each and showing certain accommodations that occur when the two meet. Further study may provide some answers to the intriguing question of the role of the harmonic properties of stretched strings, in influencing vocal harmony in Africa.

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## **Levirate, Widows, and Types of Marriage among the Dukawa of Northern Nigeria**

by Frank A. Salamone

Widowhood among the Dukawa of Sokoto State, Nigeria, is comprehensible only within the context of the meaning of marriage. In general, marriage is an ethnic boundary marker both defining the Dukawa from the dominant Hausa and serving as a repository of their own cultural values (cf. Salamone 1972, 1974, 1976, 1978a + b, 1979a, Salamone and Swanson 1979, and Prazan 1977). As such, the marriage complex, including widowhood, imposes equal responsibilities on males and females for ethnic boundary maintenance.

The necessity for ethnic boundary maintenance becomes much clearer when a brief note is made of their situation. The majority of the 30,000 Dukawa live in Rijau District, Kontagora Division, Sokoto State, near the towns of Duku and Iri, from which the two Dukawa segments take their names. From those towns, they resisted various attempts of the Fulani from Kontagora and the Hausa of Yauri to subjugate them.

Although there are differences between Duku and Iri Dukawa, including a taboo on intermarriage, they share not only a cultural identity in the face of others but also many ethnically defining cultural practices. As migrants to the area, faced with constant threats to their survival, it is not unusual that they would take care to establish and maintain ethnic markers. It is clear that they entered their current location from an area to the east, from linguistic evidence (Greenberg 1966: 174) around 10° North and 10° East, as refugees. As refugees, struggling to survive, they forged close ties with the Kamberi, another group from their original homeland (Salamone 1979a).

The Dukawa managed to resist Hausaization better than any other group in the region. A major factor in such resistance was their acephalous organization. Such organization served them well in their struggle against the British colonial organization as well, for central powers had problems locating loci of power within Dukawa settlements. Resistance was facilitated by Dukawa political structure, one of patrilaterally extended families.

Extended families are located near gardens and members share