

The African population, currently 1.3 billion, has, within it, the most ancient portions of the human race, 4.5 million years old, also known as the homo-sapiens sapiens. This ancient population, is comprised of four nations according to linguistic classifications. The four nations are: the Niger-Congo comprised of the Bantus and the Kwa groups of southern Nigeria etc.; the Nilo-Saharan comprised of the Cushitic (Somali, Oromo, Nubians etc.); the Nilotics (Acholi, Langi, Luos etc.), Nilo –Hamitic (Iteso, Karamajong, Turkana, Bari, Kakwa, Masai etc.); the Afro-Asiatic (Arabic, Amharic, Tigrinya, Barbars etc.); and the small Khoisan (bushmen) of South Africa.

Within the nations, you have branches e.g. the Bantu and Kwa branches in the Niger-Congo nation. Within each branch, you have clusters and sub-clusters. Within each nation, you will easily find common words among groups that live thousands of miles apart. The former Minister of Finance of Nigeria, Ngozi, told me that in her Ibo language, that word means Love. You will know that that is what it

means in Runyoro-Rutooro. Right now, here in Uganda, there is a UN worker with the name of Ngoongi. When I challenged her father as to what the name means, it meant a slimy floating plant known as engoongyi in our language. Ngoongi is from Cameroon!! Greeting in Zulu and Khosa goes like this: “Sauboona” — from the verb Kubona. In those dialects, Kuboona still means to see. However, in the dialects of Uganda, “to see” is described by newer words such as kulaba in Luganda, kureeba in Runyankore. However, the word kubona is still used in Runyankore to mean “to find something that has been lost”.

However, within this broad sharing of language, there are clusters that do not only share words but are actually mutually intelligible. Such clusters are like the Bantus of the Great Lakes from the Ituri forest to Mwanza and from Lake Tanganyika to Mumias in Kenya. These dialects of Kirundi, Kiha, Kihangaza, Kinyarwanda, Kinyambo, Kiziinza, Kikerewe, Rukyiga, Runyankore, Runyoro-Rutooro, Luganda, Ruruuli, Lunyara, Lusoga, Ruramoogyi, Lugwere, Lusamyia, Lumasaaba and Kiluhya of

Kenya are easily intelligible to me, a Runyankore speaker, but who has never studied those dialects — just on account of their similarity with Runyankore. Rukoonjo has got many words similar to Runyankore, but you may not get the meaning easily.

Within that cluster, you, then get a sub-cluster of people who have interacted abit more closely on account of some historical factors such as being governed together during the time of the Bachwezi or other forms of close interaction- even hostilities among the tribes promoted by the ignorant Chiefs and Kings. The Banyankore – Bahororo group, from which I come – are part of such a subcluster that is comprised of Bunyoro – Tooro, Kookyi-Kaijuumba (Rweengwe-Lwengo), Bwera (Ssembabule - Lyantonde), Karagwe, Bujinja, Buhahya, Rwanda, etc. These are close people and great producers of wealth in the form of cattle, crops, artisanship (e.g. black smithing — kuheesha or kutanaga- making bows and arrows). They developed some of the richest languages known to Man. In spite of being disturbed by the bankruptcy of the parasitic Kings

and the chauvinism they were selfishly promoting, the wealth producers evolved very rich music forms and substance that was tribal but also, sometimes, supratribal. The music forms themselves were quite similar.

As I was growing up, the Ankole - Mpororo area had been disturbed by colonialism. The affluence HM. Stanley saw in 1889 when he passed through Ankole, had been interfered with by the rinderpest of 1893, the small-pox epidemic of 1895, the trypanosomiasis spread of 1918-1964, the tick-borne diseases of the 1940s and 1950s, the unattended to cattle worms etc. On page 268 of HM. Stanley's book going by the title of "**The Darkest Africa**", he writes about the finest cattle he saw in the basin of the River Rwizi Valley. *"Crossing a narrow neck of land, descended into the basin of the Rwizi. By degrees the misty atmosphere of this region was clearing, and we could now see about five miles distance, and the contour of the pastoral plateau of Ankori. It was not by any means at its best. It was well into the droughty season. The dry season had commenced two months previously. Hilly range,*

steep cone, hummock, and plain were clothed with grass ripe for fire. The herds were numerous, and all as fat as prize cattle. In the valley, we had passed over 4,000 cattle of the long-horned species. The basin of the Rwizi, which we were now in, and which was the heart of Ankori, possessed scores of fine herds I had never seen before.” That affluence had been swallowed up by the catastrophes that serially descended on our land. My great grandfather – Kashaanku Ka Kyamukaanga, Ruhirimbura - managed to save 7 cows from the rinderpest of 1893 (kuhonora). It is from those 7 that most of my herds and those of my uncles (Kaibanda, Bimanywa, Rwamunono, Riisi, Kamanyiiro and Burahuzi), came from. My grandfather, Kabuguma, actually inherited only one of those seven- mbarangari. It is on account of those traumas, that many Banyankore-Bahororo dispersed to all the corners of Uganda such as Buganda, Busoga, Bukyiri (Lango ,Teso), Buruli etc., in search of cattle- kushuumba – to work as cattle-herds for others. On account of their industriousness, by 1964 when the tsetse infected area of Ankole was sprayed with anti-tsetse

chemicals, they came back with huge herds of cattle of their own.

Inspite of those traumas, in some of the evenings, the people would gather for some maarwa (local alcohol) or gather on a few special occasions such as marriages etc. They would, then, sing old pre-colonial songs such as the ebyegyeenza cattle of king of Karagwe, the Abagorora- shoonga, the cattle of the king of Kookyi, the idiotic wars of the tribes of the area promoted by the ignorant Kings, the song about the Bahiinda royal clan of Nkore etc. They would, of course, also sing about the contemporary themes of the colonial times such as the arrest of Gabrieli Rwakakaiga of Ibaanda following the killing of the Provincial Commissioner, Galt, the goings on during HH Kahaya II's regime like Rugaiha, a prominent man from Isingiro, about beautiful women such as Bamagara etc. The revelers would be on ekikoomi — outdoor fire — while I would be enjoying the melodies in my half-sleep state. The unsettled colonial times would, however, not allow the development of this music.

There was also the confusion brought by some of the churches, a point I could not agree on with my mother, that condemned all indigenous music as “bukafiiri”!! In the School system, indigenous music was not encouraged at all except at Ntare School where the Headmaster – William Chrichton – was liberal. However, my sub-conscious craving for the indigenous music, persisted although suppressed.

Colonialism was, eventually, defeated and they left power to the incompetent neo-colonial actors who plunged the Country into turmoil soon after independence. By 1971, we had to bear arms against the regimes. During the phase of 1971-1979, we were operating, mainly, from exile in Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia etc. It was during the 1981-1986 phase, that our rural-based resistance reconnected with the Banyankore-Bahororo peasantry that had stuck with our traditions in spite of the colonial neglected and even decampaigning. As we were fighting in the Ngoma area, a young woman by the names of Maaga (note the infiltration), came to our camp with enaanga (a harp), an indigenous instrument I had taken ages without seeing. She, immediately, formed the core of my

music group, always staying near me at the High Command inner compound. I debriefed her. Did she know the old songs, such as Bamagara, that I used to hear while young? Yes, she knew bits of those and more. She was assisted by our other supporters to resurrect these songs such as Kamuzaana, Kinkuhaire, Rwandare's wife etc. Later, my aunt, Kibazibira (Ssenga), joined us and knew many of the songs in greater detail and also knew many others that Maaga did not know such as the Emaandwa tune into which she had substituted her brothers.

After the bush time, I linked up with Mzee Kirindi and his wife, Kembuundu, who were simply a gold mine. Kembuunda is a daughter of Mzee Ndibarema, the last traditional ruler of Buhweju and Mzee Kirindi was a son of Mpiira, part of the people that had been at the Court of Ntare. These two knew so many songs. I was re-enforced with people of talent in singing such as Kakashaka and Kyanyweire. These brought in new tunes and Kakashaka accessed many more stanzas of the songs of the cattle of Karagwe and the Bahinda clan's leaders — Igumira, Ntare, Ryamugwiizi, Kijooma etc. She was

assisted by Mzee, Ruchweemihiingo, who knew many stanzas.

On account of my love for this indigenous music, my daughter Natasha tells me that I would sing to them some tunes such as Abagorola-nshoonga, the cattle of the King of Kookyi, Kamushwaaga.

Ever since the bush days, I was recording these songs and my librarians were my drivers who would lose some of them along the way but, to their credit, especially one called Byaruhanga, many were kept. Recently, Natasha and her able aide, Ataho, managed to get from my drivers a total of about 119 tunes spanning the two Centuries –from 1890s to the present. Some of these are:

- 1.Maaga: Enanga yo kutonzya
- 2.Maaga: Mpoora Nshokoozo
- 3.Kambara: Ekiziniro kya Kanyena.
- 4.Kanini: Omushana Gwakangire.
- 5.Katokye: Bwera ye Bigabiro
- 6.Katokye: Masindi na Kijunjubwa etc.

The music is excellent. This is music and not noise. I enjoy it so much. It is the main music in my cars when I am driving, plus some religious tunes and NRM songs. The content is excellent – dealings with contemporary social or political issues. The language is so rich. I used the songs to get vocabulary to enrich our Katondoozi.

I, therefore, thank Natasha, Anyine, Ataho for helping me to preserve this heritage. Most important of all, I thank the musicians – Kibazibira, Maaga, Rwandaare's wife, Kamuzaana, Mzee Kiriindi, Kembuundu, Muhara wa Beene- Ruzira, Kyanyweire, Kakashaka etc. etc., for this contribution to the saving of our heritage and our identity. I also thank my drivers for only losing some and not all of them.

I directed my team to edit out words that would be part of the tribal chauvinism that the incompetent rulers were using to keep their fiefdoms that kept our people divided. Only the innocuous ones were kept to illustrate the weaknesses of that indigenous society. In one of the songs, there are references to

the rivalry between the Bagina and Bashaambo in the Omutara area. That area is now in Rwanda.

The special and final interest that we could distil from these songs, would be the rejection of the pathetic Phenomenon of self-hatred that the Africans, especially the women, developed on account of the inferiority complex created by the Colonial trauma. Many of these songs inform us of the elements of beauty that is, for instance, appreciated by the Banyankore. You heard of Ngaanzi, the beautiful light skinned woman. However, in the hierarchy of beauty, it was Mbiindi or Nkyerengye, very dark- skinned women, that were appreciated even more. That appreciation of dark-skinned women was both esthetic and also scientific. Dark skin is on account of the melanin that acts as a sieve to filter out the harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun that can damage the human body. It is, therefore, psychologic sickness to resent the dark color. The Psychiatrist, Frantz Fanon, analyzed that mental sickness in the book: “**Black Skin, White Mask.**” The craze of African women wanting to denature their hair to look like Europeans or Asians, is pathetic. All our body parts

are scientifically designed to suit our environment. The long hair of the Whites and Asians, men or women, is to cope with their climate of coldness by the trapping more warm air around the head to help warm the whole body. The needs of the tropics is to cool the body most of the time and filter out the ultra-violet rays of the sun.

That is why Africans benefit from the dark skin and the short hair. African women of all shades (Okweera-Ngaanzi, Mwangaangye, Nfuruuto, Nyengyere, Ihaangwe etc.; kwiragura- Mbiindi, Nkyereengye, etc.; Kutukura, Nsheeka, Nzoomba, etc.), and short and scientifically correct hair, are among the most beautiful. Here below are some specimen:

See attached annexes.

Who in the World is more beautiful than these? Some trendy women, would keep it with Kushokoza (Combing) and it would be omushasha- long hair. I don't know how it affects the Science but it is natural, at least. The purpose of the dark skin on

account of melanin is scientific and medical, to filter out the harmful ultra-violet rays of the sun. It is very much treasured by the indigenous Banyankore-Bahororo. To convey how beautiful and prosperous a woman is, they say: “Nairaguza ebinyaatsi”, “she is so black that when she sits on the grass, it becomes black”, — also with a black gum-like orugasha rwe-ihamba (some wild bush that is either black or purple). The short curled hair, clustered together on top of the head, may also be both scientific and medical. It seems the scientific purposes are two: to act as a car radiator to cool the body by evaporating sweat which takes away the heat and, again, to protect the body against the ultra violet sun rays, harmful to the human body. Apparently, the curling of the hair is caused by a substance known as keratin which, itself, is a blocker or something of that sort to the UVI (ultra-violet rays). To straighten the African hair, you need to counter the keratin, therefore. Is this healthy? Secondly, the curling and clustering together of the hair obviously forms a protective cover to the head and body. When you loosen the hair and try to be Asian or European, with the hair flowing over your neck and shoulder, does it retain the same

protection? How about the cooling? The more curls you have, the bigger the surface area of evaporation — for cooling. Do you retain the same quality when you loosen the hair? It is my son Muhoozi, who alerted me about the need for using a hat on account of my bald head. He must have seen such information on the TV. Somebody told me that the Dinkas of South Sudan had to be very tall and dark to survive in the hot and humid Nile Valley. Why? They need a bigger surface area for sweating and cooling — the radiator effect in the car. They also need the strong melanin to block the ultra-violet rays. If you take short and brown people there, they may boil on account of lack of cooling.

Africa, stand up and be proud. We have everything from Wealth creation, to rich language, to the strong culture of exogamy and strong patrilineal families and to beauty of skin and hair. We do not have to ape anybody. Tetulina kwenyooma.

Yoweri K. Museveni
P R E S I D E N T