Ivory Trade and the Migration of the Northern Rhodesian Senga
Monsieur Marvin P. Miracle

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NOTES ET DOCUMENTS

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The Senga, or Northern Senga as they have sometimes been designated to distinguish them from the Nsenga of Petuake District, Northern Rhodesia, numbered some 26 thousand in 1958, according to estimates of local administrators (Northern Rhodesia, 1958). Records suggest about 10 per cent of them—about half of the adult males—are usually absent, being away at urban or mining centers for employment.

The Senga are the principal inhabitants of the Luangwa valley between the tenth and twelfth parallels, roughly, a relatively hot and dry plain of approximately 3,500 feet elevation above sea level, commonly referred to locally as the Marambo.

Rainfall is thought to be in the neighborhood of 33 inches per year, as a rule (Northern Rhodesia, 1958), and is confined to the December-March period. Little is known about the variability of precipitation.

The soil is typically sandy and covered with a fairly sparse vegetation dominated by *Acacia-Combretum* near the river and *Brachystegia-Isobellinia* as the surrounding hills are approached (Trapnell, 1950).

Characteristics of the Senga people are unknown for the most part; in fact, other than a brief summary of some of their oral tradition recorded by Lane Poole (Lane Poole, 1949), they are practically unknown to the social scientist. Their language resembles that of the Tumbuka tribe occupying an area adjacent to Sengaland on the east and south; the two tribes are generally assumed to have a similar culture because there has long been considerable intermarriage between them; but with the data now available, very little can be said with certainty about how close the resemblance is. What I can tell about them relates mainly to economic aspects of their lives.

This article is based on information supplied by 54 Senga informants in November, 1959, the bulk of whom were from Senior Chief Kambombo's area. On points concerning the Nsenga, the accounts of 10 Nsenga from the Kalindawalo chieftancy, obtained about the same time, were also used.

I am grateful to Raymond J. Aplthorpe for his helpful comments on parts of an earlier draft of this article. The research resulting in this paper was done under a fellowship granted by the Ford Foundation; however, all conclusions, opinions, and other statements presented are, of course, those of the author, and not necessarily those of the Ford Foundation.
The Senga Economy.

Techniques of production are simple, and usually involve only the axe, hoe, and knife. Foodstuffs are produced without the aid of beasts of burden or plows. Only in processing, clothing manufacture, and transportation has the impact of the machine age been significant—in a few villages, motorized grinding mills, only recently introduced, are competing successfully with the traditional grinding stone and stamping block (wooden pestle and mortar); one can get the benefit of a sewing machine near the larger stores by employing an African tailor; and the use of bicycles in transport is common.

* After V. W. Breisford, The Tribes of Northern Rhodesia (Lusaka, 1956).
The staple food varies by locale and season, but invariably is one of four, maize (Zea mays), sorghum (Holcus sorghum), finger millet (Eleusine coracana) or rice. The first three are probably of roughly equal importance in the diet, quantitatively, for the area as a whole. Pockets of rice are found here and there, and it is probably gaining in popularity, for it seems exceptionally well liked everywhere. Only finger millet is commonly used for making beer, which, among the Senga, is a thick brew taken hot through a straw. (Beer consumption, per capita, is probably fairly high. Not only is beer drinking a major pastime, but to procure labor for a particular task, and especially for hoeing, beer is usually offered, and often is the sole means of payment.)

Domestic animals, other than dogs, are not kept; and Senga say cattle cannot be, because of the tsetse fly. Goats and pigs are unpopular probably because of the damage they do to fields, and probably because owing to the abundance of game and fish, the Senga have never been hard pressed for a source of meat. Chickens and pigeons are kept, but it is game, and near the river, fish, which are the main sources of animal protein.

Like most tropical African peoples, the Senga transform their staple grains into a thick, almost dough-like mush which is eaten hot with a tasty meat or vegetable relish. Of the latter there are many, each with its own name. Few vegetables are cultivated—mainly pumpkins, gourds, and peanuts (Arachis hypogaea); instead, the Senga rely heavily on the buds, leaves, and flowers of the flora of their habitat.

Within the economy, trade is usually by barter; but in transactions with other economies, money is frequently used. Migrant laborers send home a good portion of their wages, in many instances, and maize, rice, and tobacco can be sold outside the local economy for money: maize can be sold to the Government; rice mainly to Indian merchants who operate stores in Senga country, but also to a few of the African storekeepers; and tobacco to visiting African traders, who ultimately take it to urban centers. (Some tobacco producers avoid the middleman and make the trip to urban markets themselves.)

Prior to establishment of British rule in the first decade of this century, commerce seems to have been much more important. The Tumbuka, Bisa, Bemba, and Arabs all traded with the Senga, and no less than 19 commodities were involved, viz., iron goods, salt, bark cloth, cotton cloth, baskets, mats, beads, sea shells, brass bangles, guns, gun-powder, elephant tusks, slaves, goats, dried game-meat, chickens, grain, tobacco, and poison (see Table).1

Specialization within the tribe, before British rule, but not now, was considerable, and internal trade seems to have been sizable. There were iron smiths; cloth, basket, and mat weavers; potters; and those who concentrated on hunting. The specialists exchanged their goods or services for things like labor, meat, beer, and possibly grain that they could not produce in quantity sufficient to meet their wants, owing to the time they devoted to their specialization. There is some evidence that some of these specialists accumulated goods they received from fellow tribesmen, in order to have them for barter with other tribes; and there may have been a few individuals who did little but trade; but the data are so scant and questionable that this is largely conjecture.

**Political Organization.**

Among the Senga, the political hierarchy is, so far as I know, Senior Chief, chief, group headman (headman over more than one village), village headman, and (when the headman desires) assistant village headman. My impression is

1. For a fuller discussion of trade see Miracle, 1962.
Tribes and Commodities Involved in Historical Senga Commerce.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group supplying the Senga</th>
<th>Imports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuka</td>
<td>Iron goods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisa</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>+ + +</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salt</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bark cloth</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Goats</td>
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<td>Poison</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Guns and gun-powder</td>
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<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cotton cloth</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beads, sea shells, brass lugs</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group receiving from the Senga</th>
<th>Exports</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tumbuka</td>
<td>Cotton cloth</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bisa</td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bemba</td>
<td>+ +</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arabs</td>
<td>+ + +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Baskets and mats</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tobacco</td>
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<td>+ +</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grain</td>
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<td>+ + +</td>
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<td>Chickens</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ivory</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Slaves</td>
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<td>+</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Dried game-meat</td>
</tr>
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that the Senior Chief obtained much of his current authority from the British administration, but that he was always, apparently, given special respect by other chiefs, even if his power may have been weak. This is consistent with an unpublished note by one of the early British administrators that:

The Asenga [i.e., Senga] had no tribal government at all [before British conquest]. Kambombo [the hereditary title of the Senior Chief] was regarded as the senior chief only because he fought against the Angoni. Chiefs were appointed . . . without reference to other Senga chiefs. When the appointment was made, the name of the new chief was reported to Kambombo, but it seems to have been merely a matter of courtesy (Northern Rhodesia, 1937).

Like all Senga chiefs, the Senior Chief inherits his position. Unlike some of them, he inherits from his paternal uncle.

Headmen, like the chief, are said to be selected from the members of the chief’s clan (Goma clan for the Senior Chief’s area). Chiefs can be, and so far as I know, usually are, headmen prior to being chiefs.

Traditionally, the chief had several sources of income. There were his own

2. The principal Senga clans are: Goma, Ng’uni, Kumwenda, Nyirenda, Lungu, Zimba, and Miti.
fields, worked by his wives and slaves; the toll of ivory he exacted from hunters (some say both tusks, others say only one, and still others say only half of the ivory taken from male elephants); profits from trade; and gifts from his subjects, e.g., a part of what they gained in trade, the hind-quarter of a game animal killed, or a pot of beer from every brewing (approximately a fifth or sixth of the total output, perhaps), were usually given to the chief. Yet there seems to have been no strict obligation involved; informants stress these were mere gifts—not tribute; the subjects were expected by the community to make gifts, and, at the same time, the community expected the chief to be generous.

The chief was usually host to visiting Arab traders, and some say he held a monopoly on the purchase of guns from them. In any event, the chief was probably by far the most important trader in the community, for he had much of the ivory—probably at least half of that available—and probably a large portion of the slaves for sale, as well. (The chief often paid fines of those convicted of a crime, e.g., adultery, murder, and took them as his slaves in return. In addition, the extremely poor sometimes voluntarily enslaved themselves to the rich, and the chief seems almost certainly to have been the richest in the community, so he probably got more than his share of the destitute.) Chiefs were buried with great ceremony, and sometimes several slaves, it is said, and a sizable quantity of their material wealth were buried with them.

Origin of the Senga.

What the Senga can tell of their past begins with migration to their present home perhaps two or three centuries ago. There is unanimous agreement that the former home was a place called Uluwa, which all evidence suggests was in what is now Katanga. This is also the place mentioned as a former home by the Nsenga, Chewa, Ambo, Kunda, Bisa, and possibly other tribes of North Eastern Rhodesia (see Lane Poole, 1949; Winterbottton, 1959, p. 21; and Thomas, 1958, pp. 3-5).

There is considerable evidence that prior to this time the Senga had no separate identity as a tribe, but where merely part of a larger group. The organization of this group and its relationship to other groups we know today is far from clear. Donald Fraser, who visited a part of Sengaland in 1897, takes the view that the Senga “...are a composite tribe, partly of Tumbuka and partly of Bisa origin” (Fraser, 1922, p. 86), but he gives no supporting evidence. Lane Poole takes a similar position—perhaps largely on the basis of Fraser’s observations. He asserts the Senga were originally Bisa, who in their new home intermarried with Tumbuka (Lane Poole, 1949, p. 21). But Thomas gives no support to this view in his historical notes on the Bisa (Thomas, 1958), and his knowledge of the Bisa seems fairly extensive; in fact, he clearly takes the position that the only division in Bisa ranks came when they and the Bemba separated. Nor does Senga tradition support either Fraser or Lane Poole. The Senga relate passing through Bisa country on their migration, and having attempted to settle with them on at least two occasions. It is also remembered that Chibeza Kambombo, the leader of a major, if not the main, group in the migration, was given a young girl for a wife by one of the Bisa chiefs visited on route to

3. One informant, and, in my opinion, an exceptionally reliable one, maintains that the discrepancy here stems mainly from differences in the time reference; that is to say, early in the tribe’s history, the Senior Chief, at least, received both tusks; a relatively recent Senior Chief, Chiyobe (who ruled in the latter part of the last century), reduced this levy to only the tusks from male elephants, and the precedent was followed thereafter.
their present home. A country traversed—even one crossed slowly with lengthy stops—is not to be confused with the country of origin.

If the Senga were closely identified with any of the tribes we now know, it was probably the Nsenga (despite Lane Poole's opinion that the two tribes "... have no affinities, historical or linguistic, closer than those that unite all matrilineal tribes in this Province [Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia]")—Lane Poole, 1949, p. 21).

Both Senga and Nsenga tradition is emphatic that the two tribes were together and closely related, if not the same group, when they started migration. (Several say the Chewa, Kunda, and "many others" were in the group in the early phases of the journey.) My informants claim the two tribes separated en route, the Senga continuing west, under the leadership of Chibeza Kambombo, to look for a suitable home, while a brother of Chibeza, Mundikula, is said to have been left in charge of the portion of the group whose descendants are known to us as Nsenga, and he was given at that juncture a second name of Kalindawalo ("the one who waits") which is today the hereditary title of the Senior Chief of the Nsenga. For reasons that are obscure in the traditions, Chibeza's group did not return, or successfully send directions for finding the new home, and Kalindawalo, tired of waiting, turned south with his followers and eventually arrived at the present home of the Nsenga.

Informants go on to say that there was no communication between the two groups until the last years of the nineteenth century when the Senga began journeying south to work in Southern Rhodesian and South African mines. Reportedly some of these migrant laborers encountered Nsenga and thus learned for the first time what had happened to the Nsenga after Chibeza Kambombo and Kalindawalo parted.

All this may, of course, be merely a legend constructed when the tribes began to travel freely after the Pax Britannica. It could be that it is a fable that was easily suggested when modern Senga and Nsenga discovered their tribal names were similar, as are a number of aspects of their culture, despite the fact that they have both experienced a great deal of acculturation through inter-marriage with other, but different, tribes. But if it is mere fabrication, it is somewhat surprising that it is so well known to both the Senga and Nsenga, and that the two versions are fairly close.

The Migration.

Almost every elderly Senga can give the bare outlines of the migration. Such things as the former home, the leaders in the journey thence, the first

4. Part of the legend of the origin of the Goma clan also refers to inter-marriage of Bisa and Senga:

... [during the reign of Chibeza Kambombo] there arrived a very fierce stranger with his family group. By some he was called "Muzgewa"; by others "Kachiravitanda".

... He came from UBisa, making a raid for ivory, and Kambombo fled away to Chizanda, near Chikwa. Some, however, came back by night and burnt him (Kachiravitanda) in a house. Then they heard that he was dead they came back with their chief and, finding some of those who had come with Kachiravitanda, they built together in the same village and took the common clan name of "Goma" (Cullen Young, 1932, p. 162).

5. One version is that it was Undi, a Chewa chief, who gave Mundikula the additional name of Kalindawalo; and that this happened when the two tribes reached the present Nsenga home, at which point the Nsenga decided to settle, while the Chewa pressed on.
settlements in the new home are known to many. More detailed versions can be given only by people who have taken a special interest in their history; typically they are leaders of the community, but, sometimes, fairly young and otherwise apparently unimportant men. For detail, what is recorded below is usually the consensus of about a dozen accounts; on some points of only three or four.

Information on conditions in the former home is scant, but tradition holds that the Senga were under a harsh ruler whose name has been lost in most versions (three informants, however, independently gave it as Mwata Yamvo) and who is remembered only for imposing upon the Senga the distasteful task of carrying pulled grass and weeds from the gardens. This, informants say, is what prompted the Senga to break away.

Thomas notes that the Bisa give as a reason for their departure from the same place, the policies of their former ruler; and mentions that some of his sources report there was a division of labor by groups, "... members of the Nandu (crocodile) family were charged with sweeping the royal village, and the Ngona (mushroom) family with the endless task of preparing millet for the royal brew" (Thomas, 1958, p. 5). These two "families" later became the Bemba and Bisa, respectively. Thomas tells us; thus it is more than possible that most of the present tribes of North-Eastern Rhodesia claiming to have originally been a part of this ancient kingdom were represented there by a separate specialization; and, if so, what have become the Senga would have had some identity as a group before their flight.

A secondary reason given by the Senga for their migration is shortage of land. Perhaps this was the underlying motivation, and assignment of the task of refuse carrying was only the specific event which stirred men to implement plans.

When the migration started cannot be established by the Senga, and there is little basis for doing so indirectly, although more than one writer has recorded his speculations on the matter.

Fraser, who published his comments on the Senga in 1922, asserts:

Early last century Bisa incursions came down from the Machina Plateau, fleeing before the harassments of the Wemba warriors. They had been preceded, perhaps thirty years before, by small advance parties of fugitives (Fraser, 1922, p. 86) . . .

He goes on to argue that the small parties of fugitives were the first Senga. Possibly he got this from informants not more than a generation removed from the migration, but unfortunately he does not explain his source, and his dating may be nothing more than conjecture. In any event, he appears to have visited only the Southwesternmost chieftaincies which are believed by some to have been established by a secondary wave of migrants (Lane Poole, 1949, pp. 24, 26, and 27).

Lane Poole fixes a similar date, 1780 to 1800, for the arrival of what he would distinguish as the first wave of immigrants, and he says their migration was "prolonged over the best part of a century" (Lane Poole, 1949, p. 21), hence this would date the break from the old home at about 1700. However, the accuracy of this is seriously open to question. The 1780-1800 bench-mark is apparently based on what was nothing more than a conjecture by T. Cullen Young (Cullen Young, 1932, pp. 20-27 and Lane Poole, 1949, p. 22); and, moreover, Senga tradition maintains one of the principal leaders of the migration—possibly the senior one, Chibeza Kambombo was not married until after the migration, and that he ruled long in the new home; indeed, until his first son was well mature.
Thus, the migration seems to have accounted for only a relatively small portion of his life, assuming he was more than a mere lad in the beginning, as he almost certainly was to be chosen or accepted as a leader. It is practically inescapable, then, that Lane Poole's "best part of a century" is grossly an over-estimate.

One approach to the problem would be to relate the migration of the Senga to that of the Bemba and Bisa, since Senga tradition holds that these two tribes were visited by Senga migrants during their peregrinations. One might establish the earliest possible date for the migration as the date when the Bemba-Bisa group split and the Bisa became a separate entity. But this, too, is not possible, owing to the paucity of existing data. Thomas maintains that no firm dating of the Bisa-Bemba division is possible, although he does venture the opinion that it was about 1700.

Yet another approach is to construct an estimate from the number of Senga Senior Chiefs descendant from Chibeza (there is record of 12) and from what is remembered about the duration of their respective reigns. This technique would yield 1750, plus or minus 50 years, as the date they left the old home, providing the bias in estimates of the duration of reigns is not all in the same direction. If it is, the margin of error is probably nearer 100 years.

Most narrations are silent on the conditions under which the migration started, but one I encountered stated escape from their ruler at Uluwa was planned for three years and executed at night. There is nothing in other versions to contradict this; in fact, there is some hint that the journey was started in haste, for there is unanimity that the group led by Chibeza, at least, had only one woman (Chibeza's sister who died early in the journey).

Most versions say the principal Senga leaders were Chibeza, Kambombo, Kampata Tembwe, and Kamponje Lundu, with Chibeza being senior. One version mentions Mulopwe Mpalakasangaya Uluba as a leader and the senior one; two versions make him an aged advisor to the leaders; and in most accounts he is not mentioned at all. Lane Poole reports that two of the oldest Senga living in 1922 designated Mulopwe as the ruler from which the Senga were fleeing (Lane Poole, 1949, p. 21). One of my informants who gave an exceptionally detailed account of the migration mentions Mulopwe as the first Bisa chief the Senga stayed with in their journey, and says they found him at Mpalakasanga Hill.

Possibly some of the apparent contradiction here stems from confusion over the meaning of Mulopwe. Thomas (Thomas, 1958, p. 11) notes that as late as about the third decade of this century he has heard Bisa use the term in addressing British administrators and others to whom it was desired to show respect; and, in a footnote, Lane Poole comments that it is a title and not a proper name (Lane Poole, 1949, fn. 6, p. 21). If so, there were probably several persons connected with the migration who were given this name at one time or another.

Whoever the leader was, he is well remembered for one of his special functions on the journey. All versions designate him as "the bearer of seeds", which is significant, I think, although I am not sure precisely how. There is usually some detail on this point, and several of the accounts add that the seeds were transported in his hair. (I have heard reference to the hair as a receptacle for

6. This appears at first to be at variance with Bemba and Bisa tradition recorded by Father Labreque and cited by Thomas which holds that the Bemba and Bisa were the last to leave Uluwa (Thomas, 1958, p. 4). But in the most detailed Senga account I have there is information which, if true, removes the inconsistency. This version maintains that the Senga left Uluwa before the Bisa and Bemba, but that soon after departure they were delayed by the illness of Chibeza Kambombo's sister. She failed to recover, and when the group pushed on again, they found the Bisa and Bemba had left Uluwa in the meantime, and were occupying land the Senga had to cross in their course eastward.
seed, during journeys, by both the Plateau Tonga and the Lamba, and I suspect inquiry would show there is mention of it in the traditions of several of the Rhodesian tribes. Some Senga indicate that the leader was not the only one bearing seed, but that the seeds he brought were special; some say that the leader alone carried seed, and that on reaching the new home, he made a special garden for multiplying them; yet another version is that he did not actually carry seed at all, and that this is merely a title given him. (Informants are vague as to what seeds were taken from the former home; few can name any, and there is not enough consensus to warrant mention of the little that is given on this.)

The route the migrants took is only slightly better remembered. Lakes Mweru and Bangweulu are mentioned in one narration, but not others. Two versions describe the first stop as Mphalakasanga Hill, but one of these merely designates this as the spot where the Senga and Nsenga parted; the other states the Senga arrived with the intention of settling, but a shortage of food dictated they move on to Masipi Pool, where the ease with which fish could be caught made food abundant. Here, this version maintains, there was a division in Senga ranks.

Two of the leaders, Maole Chikwa and Kasusulu Chifunda, stayed behind to fish, after the others, Chibesa Kambombo, Kampata Tembwe, and Kamaponje Lundu ventured on. (Five of the present Senga chiefs and chieftains bear the last name of these leaders, and the first two are located to the south and west of the last three.) In addition to these five, there is also the Chiwale and Mulilo chiefdoms, which were formed later.

Chief Kopa’s village is the next place referred to, and it is mentioned by two versions. According to both, the migrants stayed less than a year (one gives the period as six months, and the other is indefinite with “long enough to make gardens”). Only one version gives a reason for departure thence, viz., that the Senga men were skillful dancers whose ability excited the jealousy of Kopa’s men; the latter charged the Senga with adultery, and Kopa reportedly held court over the matter, but judged the Senga innocent. Nevertheless, the Senga leaders decided it was less than prudent to remain after the incident, and again they went on their way.

They went with Kopa’s blessing, it appears, for it is said he gave them a slave called Chimuniello as a guide, and a girl, Mwale, whom he gave with the intention that she should be the bride of Chibeza Kambombo upon reaching maturity.

From Kopa’s village, their route took them to the village of another Bisa

7. Lane Poole’s opinion is that the migrations of both the Chikwa and Chifunda groups were subsequent to that under the leadership of Chibesa Kambombo, Kampata Tembwe, and Kamaponje Lundu. Referring to the parties of Chibesa Kambombo and Kampata Tembwe as “the northern groups”, he states:

... they [Chikwa’s group] crossed the Luangwa from the west independently of, and subsequent to, the two groups above described [the northern groups] ... [the Chifunda] section migrated in two waves, both probably posterior to the two northern groups. The first was conducted by Mwinemitondo who seceded from Uluwa about the same time as the others, but took a different and longer route ... He ... arrived in the country of the Chewa Chief Chinunda. Here he settled for some time, certainly years, to obtain the protection from that chief against the raids of the Ngoni about the year 1840. When the pressure was relaxed, ... Mwinemitondo turned in a north-westerly direction and occupied the Lundazi-Lumenzi basin called Nyimbue ... about 1870 to 1880 the second migration under Kapalakonje occupied the Luelo Valley (Lane Poole, 1949, pp. 24, 26, and 27).
chief, Chibeza-Kunda, but nothing is recorded about the stop. From there, the main body of migrants (led by Chibeza Kambombo, Kampata Tembwe, and Kamaponje Lunda), proceeded to Panombwe Hill, where the last named decided to settle, but the first two, Kambombo and Tembwe, were attracted by the Luangwa Valley they saw to the east and the two peaks (really hill tops) beyond it, and these landmarks they took as their next objective.

Three versions agree that immediately on the other side of the Luangwa River they built a village, but there is no accord as to its name—one gives Chibankata; another, Chipande; and the third, Chamakonje. Two accounts maintain someone called Mulopwe was in this party—one assigns him the role of leader, and the other calls him advisor—but both agree he was left behind at this village, and that the only persons of rank who continued on in the final phase of the migration were Chibeza Kambombo and Kampata Tembwe.

These two pressed on to the double-peaked hill they sought on the eastern edge of the Luangwa Valley (Mparausenga Hill), and found the country not only fertile but uninhabited except near the base of Mparausenga Hill, where they encountered a few peaceful Tumbuka hunters who are remembered for their ignorance of the commercial value of ivory. Indeed, they are said to have been using tusks to prop up their cooking pots and to sit on, as though they were logs!

Still fascinated by Mparausenga’s twin peaks, the newcomers attempted to climb them, but failed, and on returning to the village of the hunters, told of their failure. In the language of the hunters, to fail to climb a mountain was “tagoma” (Cullen Young, 1932, p. 161), and from that time on the newcomers were called Goma. This is said to be how the Goma clan got its name.

All accounts agree that at this juncture Chibeza Kambombo was the leader, and that the group was womanless except for Mwali, the girl (still not a woman) given by Kopa to Chibeza.

Near the village of the hunters, on the banks of Mparausenga stream, the migrants finally settled, and called their first village Chipubulume, which means “men who pound,” apparently in reference to the men having, by necessity, to do the feminine task of pounding grain.

The village was probably not long without women, but the only marriage recorded is that of Chibeza Kambombo to one Mulowa, a Tumbuka woman of nearby Chama village.

Kampata Tembwe, for reasons not given, but probably because he wanted a kingdom of his own and preferred not to challenge Chibeza Kambombo, left eventually to settle on the next affluent of the Luangwa River to the south. The timing of his departure is not given in the traditions I have collected, but Lane Poole states it was not until the death of Chibeza, which would be at least 15 or 20 years after Chibeza’s marriage, since Chibeza had at least one mature son at the time.

The immigrants seems to have prospered from the beginning in their new home. Chibeza apparently knew something of the commercial value of elephant tusks, and seems to have had information that east of the new home ivory buyers could be found. This is consistent with identification of the former home with what is now Katanga.

Such accounts as we have of the historical trade of what is now Katanga, suggest that Lake Nyasa Arab ivory buyers were actively trading with tribes of

8. Lane Poole notes that it had a second name of “Chiwilila,” or “the place of wailing”, and he suggests the wailing had its root in the absence of women (Lane Poole, 1949, p. 22). There is no reference to this in the accounts I have encountered.
Katanga towards the end of the nineteenth century, and presumably considerably earlier. Arnot, a British missionary, wrote of one of these chieftaincies—that of Msidi—in 1886-1888:

At Msidi’s capital I have met with native traders from Uganda; the Unyamwesi country; the Ungala, to the east of Lake Tanganyika; the Luba country almost as far down as the Stanley Falls [now Stanleyville]; the basin of the Zambesi; Sumbu; Bule, and Angola, as well as Arab trades from Lake Nyasa and Zanzibar (Arnot, 1889, p. 235).

Cameron received reports of such trade when he traveled near the same area a decade earlier, and it may well have been known a few decades earlier yet, the period when Chibeza and his band appear to have started their migration.

Whatever its basis, Chibeza used his information concerning ivory buyers not only to augment his wealth, but to extend his suzerainty over the inhabitants of this new land. According to both Senga and Tumbuka tradition, he asked for some of the tusks that cluttered the Tumbuka camps and villages, and, when they were given, sent a party east with them under instructions to find buyers. Arab traders were contacted in the vicinity of Lake Nyasa and Chibeza’s envoys returned laden with cloth, and possibly beads, brass bangles, etc., part of which was distributed to the Tumbuka. Thus began trade with the Arabs which continued until it was crushed by British rule.

There was a political cost attached to the material gain of the Tumbuka, however. They bitterly recall that Chibeza proclaimed himself their ruler not long after the return of this first trading expedition, and that when they asked upon what authority he replied they had in effect paid him tribute by giving the tusks, hence, they had acknowledged their subservience. Apparently the Tumbuka were too timid or too weak to effectively challenge this chicanery.

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