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**Songs recorded in Kanga village, Mafia Island, Tanzania,
between 1965 and 1967**

Songs in notebooks, not on tape

NB in this version I have changed the order and put like with like e.g. kalewa, taarabu etc. 'NB' means notebook, and each is numbered. Informants who helped decipher meanings included Mwaharusi Haji (see other interviews with her on this website) and Mwahadia Athman (a pseudonym for the wife of Mohamed – they are the subjects of my book African Voices, African Lives (1997)).

The main kinds of songs are as follows:

- ☒ *Kalewa are women's impromptu songs, often sung while dancing over two pestles crossed on the ground. They always have a hidden meaning (ndani kwa ndani) and often refer to current events or quarrels. Sometimes another woman will respond to the first.*

- ☒ *Taarabu songs are usually about love, they have set words, and are sung to a small drum beat, with a lead singer and a chorus. Many come from Zanzibar or are heard on the radio.*

- ☒ *Ritual songs are specific to particular rituals such as Siku ya Mwaka, the bringing out of the circumcised boys from seclusion (hando)*

1. Songs of the Swahili New Year - Siku ya Mwaka (also known as Mwaka Koga and Nairuz) NB14.97.

1. *Mwaka ule, mwaka ule, aliekuse* (Bt. Ali Mgunya)

This is sung as they are going to bathe in the sea. (uliekuse – utupe salama)

2. *Ile, ile, na ile, ile pemba twaione* (Bt. Hadilidi, Saburi's wife)

Sung as they are returning to the town

3. *Kijembe, kijembe, kijembe changu, kiiba para* (Bt. Hija , Mgeni Hatibu)

(Bt. Nyihaji gives a different version: '*Kijembe kogoroka, ukichoka, inama, inuka*)

4. *Nalitaka liwali, nyumba liubwa* (Bt. Ali Mgunya)

This is sung by the women as they go round the village to each house, the owner of which throws something over them. They then go into the house and are given money, which she describes as 'kitu kingo'. They don't go into all the houses in the village, just those in their own area. She herself didn't go last year, but the year before they went to sing this song at Mushibe Silima's house, and they were given money and had millet thrown over them. She herself goes to Rasini to bathe in the new year, but when she lived in Changwa, she used to go there. You just go to the nearest beach.

Songs for rites of passage

2. Wedding songs NB 17:66.

Songs sung by the bride's party to that of the groom to get money off them

1. *Bwana anakula soro (kombo la lima) soro la manyamyama*
(Mwahadia says that soro is 'kitu cha raha' so it also means a woman, as does nyama)
Or *Soro mzuri kabisa bwana, soro ilvyopikia bwana*

2. *Amekula, ameshiba bwana, palipobaki, baasi*

3. *Maskini anaomba pesa, inama uchukuani, lau kama pesa moja nipe*

4. *Bembezi tupeni (chorus)*
Hamna, hamna, leo harusi, nakuja, hamna leo (solo)

3. Songs for bringing circumcised boys out of seclusion (jando)

Tolowa leo, amemwambia baba, leo tolawa (repeated with mama, mjomba etc)
(NB14:131)
Usionoke na fundo, naipe mwenye ;ake, nasema naye Oh, ikiwa mchezo chungu irakaze kazaa naye (NB15:105)

Ah, ndugu zetu kazaa naye, miguu ya fagio naye, kanifanya mbaya Upata shehaweha. Chorus pandawe (NB15:106)

Another song: *Iwape we? Iwapi we? Mama ya harusi, aje tuhangaika naye*

4. Women's kalewa songs

NB 18: Vigil (Keshu) for bringing children out of jando 14/10/66.

1. *Watu wanaume kenda kuchukua jioni na aibu sokoni*
The men went to get it in the evening, and it was a matter of shame in the market
(Mwahadia: thinks it was sung by Bt. Silima, mother of binti Seleman, Bakari Ali's wife). The song means that the woman goes to men and gets presents

2. *Anachekwa na wanaume wenziwe na wake achukuliwe (i.e. his wife)*
He was laughed at by his fellow men because his own wife was taken
(the husband used to steal other men's wives, now the cuckolded husband has paid him back by taking his own wife)

3. *Nachoka kupikia Jaluo, hana kula, hana nguo*
I am tired of cooking for the Luo, he has no food, he has no clothes
(A Jaluo is a man who gives his wife nothing, [because he is a mainlander (Luo)]. So what is the use of cooking for such a one?)

4. *Mposaji, umetuharibu nini? Neno limeingia*
Go between, what have you spoiled for us? Word has got out
(Mposaji is the go-between who has revealed the secret of an illicit relationship)

5. *Akisema simulia chakula, kwenda kule kusimiulia*

If you tell someone about the 'food' (sex), she will go and tell others
(a woman's friend tells on her, that she has a lover. You can't even trust your women friends)

(Bt. Haji says that chakula means 'the food of the night i.e. sex. The song means that a wife goes and tells others what her husband does in bed)

6. *Hana miguu ya ufagio kaja kuudhi wenzio*

She does not have skinny legs, she has come to annoy her co-wife
(co-wife's insults – skinny legs, but it is also refers to Fatuma bt Hija who has very skinny legs) Bt. Haji says that a gossip is also called 'miguu ya fagio')

7. *Mumewe nimechukua mpaka seruali limevua, limevyosema*

I have taken your husband, I have even removed his trousers, so it is said

8. *Mwenyewe niweka, mchukuzi kachukua, kenda kusimulia*

I have put it myself, the carrier has taken it, and gone to tell everyone about it
(Bt. Nyihaji: the woman gets a present from her lover, leaves it with a friend who tells everyone; on another occasion she said it mean that what the woman left there was gossip, a false story, and it spreads): Mwahadia: a woman has a husband and then another woman comes and seduces him, having done this she has to go around boasting of it)

Jando of Ali Manzi's children. Taking the boys out (Kutoa watoto jandoni).

Kalewa songs NB 15:134.

NB This jando was filmed by the BBC in 1976 – see film series *Face Values* 1978).

1. *Ah, mama Patrisha, nipige picha, nionana na mpenzi*

2. *Mwinyi mkia ya pweza (penis) watu wanalilia, mwenye kaubani*

(This is probably about Bt. Abdurahman: since the time when her husband divorced and recalled her, he has never slept with her and she has told everyone)

3. *Kuja kalewa na ifilimbi (whistle) mkononi*

She has come to the kalewa with a whistle in her hand

4. *Baada ya mataraziwe (man) kenda kuchukua jioni, sukusuku (=ugomvi, also could mean type of cloth used for making dresses) mbona hatuoni?*

(Mwahadia: the meaning is that the woman goes with men and gets nothing for it, even though she boasts to her fellows about it. She added that there are plenty of women in Kanga who do this, and in Bweni and Kirongwe. Once a woman has established such a reputation, men come to them. Some women do it because they like men, but Mwahadia thinks it is useless)

Continuation 14/1/066, NB 18:144

1. *Nilipona maji (vaginal fluid) nilisema manowari (male) utazama*

When I saw the water, I said that the warship would sink

(Mwahadia says that sometimes moshi is substituted for maji)

2. *Ikiwa saa sita, bwana anakula njunja kwa sukari*

If it is twelve o'clock, the man is eating tidbits with sugar (i.e. he is having sex)

3. *Ikiwa saa nne, univalia fulani kwa pama (kofia)*

NB 20:22. No particular shughuli – more kalewa

1. *Hogo la kigoma linapita ndani kwa ndani, linabwajukia (linakojelea)*
(the penis has penetrated right inside, now the sperm spurts out)

2. *Amka tena, ajilie hogo lako, alikupa babayo (or mamayo, dadayo etc.)*
Wake up again, use the penis which was given you by your father

NB12:131 Kalewa songs sung by Mwabora binti Ali

1. *Silali na msiba Jaluo, kakatwa mkono*
I don't sleep with the unfortunate Luo, his hand has been cut
(because he fornicated with someone's wife, the Luo's hand was cut by the angry husband)

2. *Unasema mche wake haazime, tuona shughulini*
You said that his pestle doesn't stop, let's see at the event

3. *Nichoka mimi kusema ma mkwe wangu, sasa kwa heri, nakwenda zangu*
I am tired of talking to my in law, now goodbye, I am going home.

4. *Nipe kijembe, nitachimba miti shamba, nifundishe uganga*
Give me a small hoe, I will dig up herbs, so that I may teach witchcraft

5. *Kula, nakula, kulala na nalala, dhiki yangu kitambaa*
As for eating, I eat, as for sleeping, I sleep, My problem is clothes (a cloth).

6. *Wali nakula, chai nakunywa, dhiki yangu kitambaa*
I eat rice, I drink tea, my problem is clothes

7. *Mbwa anazuma, nguruwe anaduma, msumari ana sunguruma*

8. *Siendi hudhuruni, ninayo aiba ya dada, katukana mkwewe*
I don't go to events, I am ashamed of my co-wife who insulted her sister in law.
(i.e. her sister in law is continually talked about)

9. *Roketi (woman who is quick to alight on a man) inakwenda ikitua, akiweka kachukua*

10. *Useme we, sijui kweka mume, kufuru imempata*
You said that I don't know how to treat a husband, but you got divorced, not me
(Bt. Waziri sang this during the pounding (utwanzi) of paddy for the feast, referring to Bt. Faki)

NB20:144

Mume wangu namtaka, lakini dada kanishika, kwa mitalasimu (uganga wa Koran)
I love my husband, but my older sister (or co-wife) has got hold of me with Koranic magic

(Commentators knew who the singer was referring to and the same song was also sung by another woman about her co-wife (dada))

Hukuitia maji, kukuitia kipamba, chuma nitakicharanga
You didn't have to put water (after childbirth), you didn't have to wear a cloth (to catch the bleeding after a birth), so I will fry the penis as much as I like
Bt. Nyihaji sang this song and explained its meaning: A wife sings this to her jealous husband. She tells him that he didn't bear children (and so have to wash and wear a sanitary cloth after the birth) and that she will fornicate as much as she likes (chuma – penis)

Tape 6. NB20:6, 7 (not sure what kind of song this is)
Dada Mwahadia shushungi (uso) mbele mti mwenye miiba
Kanisambia kakweli (panda)
Upo katika pakatika (kuanguka majani) hauna usele
Usele una hitibu mwenziwe twekele (yahakubali, ndege ndege)

Kuja mtumbura ndani ya mangengele (mafuta ya samaki au kuku)
Yamlimbu limbu (zawadi) mwenzenu, kalimbwa
Kalimbwa na tenga (kakamtwa na samaji)
Tenga mwana na siwani (bahari)
Kanilorere (kamtazamie) wala ndundu (mwituni)
Nenda kamtakie mwamake mwema

NB18:141. Kutoga watoto wa kike (girls' ear-piercing) 15/10/66
Sindano, mwiba, kitu cha kuogopea moyoni, uchungu
The needle, the thorn, is something to fear in your heart, bitterness

More Kalewa songs

NB These are odd songs recorded in my notebooks which I did not have time to discuss with informants

1. *Kina kaka nakuageni, nitakufa mikonini, msisitike sonondoni*
2. *Kimasi kura gani? Kinahangaika majangwani. Kimepanda Kichangweni*
3. *Wale kule kina nani? Waliosimama majangwani ya Hatibu Selemani?*
4. *Nani yule mjomba Juma? Unakwenda ukilinga nyuma, kiduma hakipo kasha sukuma*
5. *Dada yetu ule hana haya hakulikani, anapolala kageuka kabuki mbaya*
6. *Ukitaka kulima, lima Kitunguja, ukiniitia mimi, nitakuja, kimasi kirudi Unguja*
7. *Nani yule Kasimu? Limeingia wazimu, iko wapi rangi ya ndimu?*
8. *Nani yule Patlisha? Umelifungua lile dirisha, unawatazama unawalisha au unataka kukutupiga picha?*
9. *Jua kali lina ngurumo kama gari kaivunja serikali*
10. *Hatibu na Seleman mnagombia kitu gani? Kaeni uzuri na imani.*

11. *Kidume king'ola kiguzoni. Kaking'ora Makame Athumani, Juma katafuta Machangweni.*
12. *Amestarehe huko nyumbani, mchele wa China madukani, Juma analia, kwenda bomani.*
13. *Makame Athumani kuna ila ila yenyewe, imezidia amemwiba ng'ombe Juma, analia.*
14. *Ukiniita niko huko huko, Hatibu Mzee kavuta kiko*
15. *Uliolitaka kisha pata, wetu lia upate talaka.*
16. *Kanga mwaka huu hatari, mtu na mwenyewe halali, wamemvunjia duka Musa Ali.*
17. *Kuna mwana kachokoza ng'ondo, kaifuja ile sonondo, China kwa mkende.*
18. *Nilikuwa miye pande gani? Nikilivitoe Madundani, vimekwisha, narudi nyumbani.*
19. *Chemini mtu gani? Kapinduswa kule njiani. Naondoka kule kusini.*
20. *Mpenzi unaondoka nakwenda shuleni, na wazazi nawaacha shambani, salaam zifike nyumbani*
21. *Mkokoto ni karibu na Pemba, Asha na Fatuma naviwapenda, tutonana Rabi akipenda.*
22. *Nimekosa ya kuangukia, na hivi nilvyo sijafika, mpe salaam mheshimiwa.*
23. *Niliekuwa mi safari, umeniita hapa unwajani, ngoma imekwisha, tukalala nyumbani (?)*

5. Taarabu songs

*Verse 1. Bibi mwenda shamba, utarudi lini?
Utarudi kesho, mwezi ishirini
Kama hadiki, niapa na mimi
Chorus: Uhuru tumaa, sumailia, sumailia*

*Verse 2: Toka haya nenda, skila sima anya ya tenda
Ni mambo magumu kuingia wazimu, sana nakupenda*

*Verse 3. Na usingizi, nilale wape
Nyumba ya udongo, mwenyewe hataki
Nitajenga yangu, nyumba ya mabati*

Verse 4. *Tamu ya sukari, unipe miye
Umenipa nyingi, kasida nilowe
Tamu ya shirika, namali nitoe*

Verse 5. *Asha na Fatuma yuko darajani
Anaomba pesa, kwa Mabayani
Zako limekwisha, akupe nini?*

Verse 6. *Mambie mama, anioze mke
Mwanawe nichoke kitanda cha pweke
Roho ni mgeni mara kwenda zake*

NB12:131-40 Taarabu

Song 1: *Njaa na ungonwa, maradhi we, maradhi we
Kisikwachie si razi (radhi?)
Nini imekuwa siku hizi sipata usingizi?*

*Hapa duniani ni imam matatu
Ya kwanza ujzima, la pili kitu
La tatu bahati pendwa na watu*

*Nakupenda wewe kwa hatiri na fusi
Nakupenda macho kwa wingi wa nyusi (nyeusi?)*

Song 2: *Moyo we, moyo we, usi, usiwende keze moyo
Moyo ukimwendeza atakupoteza
Ukitkutia hasara, moyo wangu moyo wangu
Umemeinigia imani, nambe nini
Sina kitu mkononi maskini
Maskini moyo, hana raha dunianai*

*Uzuri wa umbo lake, hakuna ulimwenguni
Fanya kama kutembea, m la azizi unifike
Mambo yameni tokea kwa kila mtu ana lake
Muhitaji sina haya, wacha watu wanicheke*

Chorus: *Mume wangu we mume wangu we
Nitasikua nywele leo name?
Nitakufanya longongi namna?
Nitakuchezea mchezo namna?
Nitakuvalia kanzu namna?*

NB12:135 Taarabu song

*Dunia matawia, duna matawia
Ukilala nitakulalia, ukikaa nitakukalia
Dunia matawia, dunia matawia*

*Nipe wino wa hamari, na karatasi nyeupe
Niandike mashairi, siri ya moyo nikupe
Kupenda kuna hatari, mpenzi usinitupe*

Ndege wa tuyuri ni mzuri sana
Ndege ni adimu wa kupatikana
Ndege nipe siku ya kuja kuonana
Mpenzi katiri, hayana huruma
Kata masikini yatamsukuma

Najua zamani, damu yangu mbovu
Najua zamani, damu yangu mbovu
Penye kufuliwa, hapa wachipovu

Utalia, utalia, mahaba ya kizunguka
Yacha wivu, yacha wivu, na wingi upalelaze
Waniziki, waniziki, kunikini, huniwezi
Yahca nende, yacha nende, afurahishe mpenzi

Mazoea ya ghafula, yanitia fedhehani
Kuepuka hana hila, yamekaa moyoni
Kilicho mabala (mbali?) kina mashaka, sili nikafurahika
Kiko ndani ya zuhara Wasitari kakishika
La kini mwinyi kusubiri, hawachi kurufahika

Nilisafiri, bwana akunitypa merezi
Nashinda jua la kutwa, na mi njaa siwezi
Tafadhal bwana wangu, uniuze kwa Songoro Nyamwezi

Jana nililala nikakuota nikatuka
Kwa yako mapenzi usiku silali nakumbuka
Mpemnzui regeza mwendi, unanikondesha

Si tamu tena baridi, ukiwa unatia majji
Kula laye makombo, wajiona kafaidi

Haya haya suku etc.
Zile ajabu ya nyota
Leo zizo mawinguni
Sikudhani kama tahuni
Mpenzi rejea, leo unishe huzuni

Ajabu ya njiwa, hana mazoea
Mtama natia, m,aji nachotea
Kalivunja tundu habibi, kalacha behewa

Siktaki kelele, toka, nenda zako
Kauzii mbele biashara yako
Kwache wa kweli, na vimba macho

Pokea yangu hidaya
Hidaya kitu kizur, Mpenzi akininulia
Harafu kitu kizuri, mpenzi akininunulia

Cheusi chembamba, inamsikitikishe
Kanitia homa, akunikodesha
Kinapo dumu, kuja kanitoshe

*Karibuni, karibuni uliosimama
Tazama roho yangu nilivyokingama
Kupatanisha, kupata naomba salaam*

*Mwekundu mweupe, watazama nini?
Nipe mtama, mta mashbuke
Kitoto la Kihindi, nyekundu jeupe
Watazama nini macho kupe kupe*

*Nakupanda ngazi, juu sikufika
Nakafika kati, nikafaramika
Mlinda baharu, vyombo vinapita*

NB17:71-7 Utwanzi (collective pounding of paddy for feast) Taarabu

*Nipatapo usingizi kuziota ndoto zako
Kustuka na machozi, nikikita jina lako
Kaa tu, usinvunje ahadi, wewe wangu, mimi wako*

*Ndege wangu karuka, na barua mkononi
Na kitu kikipenda kisikujae moyoni
Itikuja kikutokea, kama wanja wa machobni*

*Anakupa salamu, kweli kwangu muhibu
Ukienda mwambia, kwambie taratibu
Ukienda ka pupewe, mambo utaharibu*

*Mpenzi na kusasa, pokea yangu nasaha
Iwapo nimkuposa, nakumba msamaha
Haya sahu kabiusa we mwenzako, sina furaha*

*Na siku hiyo pepo tuo, Manaja ya baharini
Akkirudi asalm bisalmi
Nina kombe na niye kulisha msikitini
Jaro ugonjwa maradhiwe, kuiacha si radhi*

*Natahidi jihadiu kuonana kwa kwiba
Kama leo kasafiri kijano changu cha mpilipili
Kama mpenzi hayupo, mpenzi naomba arudi
Tuje tuketi wawili
Ja ugonjwa maradhiwe etc.*

*Moto vijana tujenge Tanzaniua
Tutoe jasho letu kwa kupo moja*

Taarabu song given to me by Bimkbwa at my house

*Mpenzi wangu azizi, nakuslima uliko
Mimi huko sijiwezi, sababi nipendo lako
Yaani adhibu mapenzi, naadhibika mwenzako
Chorus: Kaa tusivinje ahadi, wewe wangu mimi wako*

*Salaam zangu ni hizi, zikujiia huko hulko
Ukipokee, mpenzi ufurahi moyo wako
Chorus*

*Napatapo usingizi, huzioba ndotoa zako
Kubysy ka mpenzi kumbew ni kuvuli chako
Kustika na machoza, nakakwita jina lako
Chorus*

*Wanijua waziwazi, roho yangi iko kwako
Wali sina kzuizi, sijui ndu (?) juu yako
Yaani adhibu mapenzi haadhibika mwenzako*

*Mpenzi nakuasa, poka yangu nasaha
Iwapo nimekuklosa, nakuom ba msaha
Hayao sahu kabisa, mwenzo sina furaha*

*Lolote nitakuridhi, kila utalotambo
Kwangu tafanya (kufanya?) faradhi, kukupa unachotaka
Nitaondoa yangu hadhi, madhali nakutaka*

*Jinsi ninavyokuham, mwenzako nakudhukumika
Si hofu kuilasumu, madhali nakutaka
Atakae ni laumu, bado hayamfikia*