**Interview with Hammer Simwinga and Allan Chungu, July 2018.**

**What are signs of achievement, respect, and success in the indigenous villages?**

**How might a great journey with a great goal be represented?**

Possibly, climbing the Muchinga escarpment.

**What signifies, success, achievement, pride in the village?**

Having **a full food barn**, overflowing with **finger millet** or **maize**.

An large, **intact field of cassava**. One that has not yet been harvested.

That is a sign of security, that one is not living from hand to mouth.

**Cassava** is a security crop. They always keep some such fields intact for security in case of periods of hunger. It is like money in the bank.

When a young man builds his **own hut**, and has his **own small field** -- now he can make decisions on his own about what he is growing.

To be married, the potential in-laws will want him to have these things.

Small livestock, **beyond a chicken**, is a sign of success, such as **pigs** (inkumba) or a **goat** (im-bush’).

What brings **shame**?

***Working for others***. If you are an adult age, but you continue working for others. Young people without their own small field work under their parents.

***When you must ask for an axe or a hoe from your neighbor***. Every man and household should own an axe or hoe if he is to be considered worthy to be in an important n’saka meeting and be able to advise.

They will say, **“He has no axe or hoe, so what is he going to tell us?”**

***Not to have a toilet pit*** *i*s a shame.

A **spear** used to be important (in the old times) -- over time it has been replaced by farming implements.

The **remaining spears** are old. *People treasure them*.

Hammer:

In my culture, **the nmanga culture**, we call it ***isumu*** -- one spear is kept in the family lineage, from generation to generation, signifying your tribe and identity.

As the first born -- I was given on my father’s death **the family gun**, and it must pass on through the Simwinga males. **Before guns, they used a spear**.

It is a symbol of family or clan: one item can only go to the person who will be head of the clan.

For the **matrilineal Bisa people**, it could perhaps be more of **a woman’s object.**

What is the equivalent in Kaluba?

It could be a spear, a hoe, a broom, a mortar?

A symbol of achievement for a man, he starts getting recognition with his own axe or hoe.

For women: when she gets married it is an achievement. The Bisa are matrilineal. [Therefore they do not have quite the same tradition of paying a bride price.]

In the old days, there were prized objects in the home.

**Clay pots** for keeping **water** and **grain** were the most important. There were different **pots**.

* The grain pot keeps seeds for the next season safe from pests. It is sealed completely.
* The water pot.
* The calabash for beer and fermentation.

Cooking utensils.

It would be good to develop a village seed fair, to conserve and recover certain seeds. We need to create “traditional seed” banks. People will bring *all* the seeds, and identify which are diminishing. Science is replacing existing seeds with hybrids.

**What makes people proud?**

Elders, over 50, are proud if memers of an insaka committee, a committee for the wise.

They are nominated by the general population of elders.

The headman, when there is an issue, will look for those who can consider it. If they receive an invitation, they become a permanent member of a village insaka, and become very proud and important.

Becoming custodians of customary issues, being appointed to an office so you are now affiliated with the chief’s committees. The [advisors] are appointed and are not by birth.

**What is the role of the Chief?**

The chief is not a dictator. He sits in his palace and asks, “Who are the wisest people in the community?” They do much searching for good advisors, even among women or external people. The Chief goes through a rigorous investigation and seeking consultation from the community for who is best to help.

The chief has close relatives with whom he consults privately to be part of the chief’s nsaka committees. Decisions are made by committees, not by the chief.

When approach by external agents, some chiefs will sign land or resources away, but most will wait for village headman to convene, and/or nsaka committees to convene.