



The Kungoni Art Project records this figure of Ngaliba, the Great Circumcisor of the Yao people of Malawi, by Thomas Mpira, which was commissioned for Sun 'n' Sand Holiday Resort, Mangochi (2015). It stands before a frieze, also by Kungoni Centre, depicting the initiation ceremony.

The Kungoni Art Project [KAP] was conceived in August 2012 and work began in January 2013. This is the second of two brief annual reports.

The purpose is:

- 1 To thank and to keep informed all those who have supported KAP, by contribution of work, resources or material or by expression of interest;
- 2 To generate further support for KAP, and
- 3 To encourage debate as to how KAP might develop and what form it might eventually assume.

Background

Kungoni Centre of Culture and Art was established by Claude Boucher Chisale, a Missionary of Africa from Canada with interests in art and anthropology (and himself an artist), at Mua Parish, Malawi in 1976. Over the past four decades

more than two hundred artists have been active at the Centre, primarily in wood but also in other media, such as paint and pottery. Kungoni work forms part of collections worldwide; and significant decorative schemes for churches and other institutions are to be found throughout Malawi and in countries as far afield as Kenya and Germany.

It remains uncertain how much longer Kungoni Centre will continue in its current form. The only substantial study of its work (Ott, M. (2000). *African Theology in Images*. Blantyre: CLAIM) draws on research dating back to the 1990's and has different emphases from KAP. The approach of Kungoni Centre's fortieth anniversary is an appropriate time to secure the archive and to bring the history of its activity up to date.

Archive

Just about the entire Kungoni archive (as it relates to art) has now been digitalized; this comprises c. 5000 photographs (and more slides), 500 written documents and 450 DVD's. The archive has been copied to several locations.

The material encompasses: record of commissions and works of art (including those that pre-date Kungoni Centre); Chewa, Ngoni and Yao ritual; inculturated liturgy and landscape and nature studies. Surviving sketches and studies for commissions and works of art have also been digitalized.

The work of identification of the digitalized material is ongoing, but is just about complete as far as photographs and slides are concerned. They are added to the database (see below) as they are identified.

Specialist advice on how to archive the material to library standard would be welcome.

New Material

Travels have been undertaken throughout Malawi and abroad (in countries that include England, Germany, Italy, Kenya, South Africa and Zambia) to visit Kungoni work and to renew the photographic record. This has allowed not only considerable expansion of the database but also study of how Kungoni work has been received by individuals and communities over the years.

In addition, KAP incorporates material that has been contributed by institutions and private collectors throughout the world.

Database

The principal manifestation of KAP is the database, which attempts a fully searchable collection of all Kungoni art, together with information on associated people and trees / timber. It is being created with FileMaker Pro software; and all photographs and descriptions are backed up separately, which allows easy conversion to other database programmes.

The database has currently some 3500 entries and 8500 photographs; and is divided into three sections: Kungoni Work, Kungoni People and Kungoni Trees. An introduction to each section of the database and an account of how it is organized are to be found on the new website (see below).

The database allows searches to be conducted according to criteria such as project, artist, date and theme, and will become the most important resource both for preserving the archive and for compiling the art history.

Although the database now contains over three quarters of the available material, it still requires a considerable amount of correction and revision.

Website

The first edition of the new website is now on-line at

<<http://www.KAPmalawi.org/>>

It is intended to revise the website from time to time to present more examples from KAP's collection, as time and knowledge of web design allow.

Work in progress is to put on-line a recording of the Kungoni Open Day 2013 and a 'walk-through' guide to Mua Parish Church.

The next substantial revision is proposed for New Year.

Art History

It remains the intention to produce an academic study of Kungoni Centre from an art historical perspective. Work on this will become possible as the database assumes a stable form.

A popular account, with illustrations, may follow. It would be sold to support either the continued activity of Kungoni Centre or work to preserve its memory.

Beneficiaries

KAP will be of benefit to all those who have interest in subjects that include: African (specifically Central African) Art, African Traditional Religion, Christianity in Africa, the peoples and cultures of Malawi, Inculturation and Missiology.

It is hoped that the Missionaries of Africa, the Diocese of Dedza and Mua Parish, together with the artists themselves and their families and communities, will welcome this work of record.

Friends and Supporters

Without the generous welcome and support of guardians of institutions and holders of private collections in Malawi and elsewhere (in Africa and Europe) work thus far would have proved impossible. Zikomo kwambili!

It is hoped that publication of the new website will generate further expression of interest and contribution of material.

Further Support!

KAP is undertaken on a voluntary basis, but the cost of computers and storage is substantial. There is no support beyond what can be supplied locally; and a theft in January (of just about all hardware) means that KAP is in need of funds. Accordingly, any offer of support or suggestion as to institutions that might be able to make available grants would be gratefully received.

Desiderata in the medium and long term include the permanent archiving of the database and the finance of possibly two publications.

Thanks

Thanks are due:

- 1 To all those who have contributed material or who have helped to identify material;
- 2 To Mua Parish and to the Southern African Province of the Missionaries of Africa;
- 3 To Claude Boucher Chisale and to the staff of Kungoni Centre, especially Davie Maleka Chaone (now retired), Joseph Kadzombe, Florensio Nowah and Andrew Nyengere, and
- 4 To Samson Phiri, assistant and photographer.

Work for 2015 / 2016

It is intended that the database will be complete to a standard at which it is useable by 2nd November 2016, which is forty years to the day since Claude Boucher Chisale arrived at Mua Mission. A representative body of work (and possibly an extract from the database) will be published in subsequent editions of <<http://www.KAPmalawi.org/>>.

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