



TUMBUKA

LANGUAGE & CULTURE

The Tumbuka are an ethnic group living in Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania. In the Tumbuka mythology, **Chiuta** is the chief deity; he is all-powerful, omniscient and self-created. Chiuta literally means Great Bow and is symbolized in the sky by the rainbow. He is also a god of rain and fertility. Tumbuka, like most African languages, has many myths that constitute its cultural heritage. These myths, told around fires at night, often to the accompaniment of drumming and choral responses, aim to teach children moral behavior and to entertain. these **vidokoni** (fictitious stories) have a moral behind them.

Most of these myths have been weakened by contact with Western mores, but many have stood the test of changing times. There are three animals mentioned more than any others in Tumbuka mythology and these are **fulu** (tortoise), **kalulu** (hare) and **chimbwi** (hyena). Fulu is considered the wisest animal, chimbwe the villain and kalulu the clever trickster and manipulator who can only be defeated by fulu.

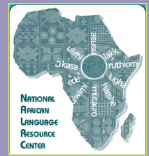
Good afternoon (Afternoon greeting)	Mwatandala uli? (How has your day been?) Natandara makola, kwali imwe? (I had a fine day, how about you?) - reply
Good night	Usiku uwemi (good night) Mugone makola (sleep well)
Good night	Usiku uwemi (good night) Mugone makola (sleep well)
Thank you	Nawonga chomene (I thank you) Tawonga chomene (We thank you) Yewo chomene (Thank you very much) Yewo

USEFUL PHRASE IN TUMBUKA

Hello (General greeting)	Monile Monire a mama (>f) Monire a dada (>m) Monire a gogo (>elder) Monire mose (>pl)
How are you?	Muli uli?
Reply to 'How are you?'	Nili makola, kwali imwe?
What's your name?	Zina linu ndimwe njani?
Good morning (Morning greeting)	Mwagona uli? (How did you sleep?) Reply: Nauka makola, kwali imwe? (Fine, and you?)

STUDYING TUMBUKA IN THE UNITED STATES

Please contact the National African Language Resource Center, or check the NALRC web site at <http://www.nalrc.indiana.edu/>



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TUMBUKA WOMAN

NATIONAL AFRICAN LANGUAGE RESOURCE CENTER (NALRC)



WHO SPEAKS TUMBUKA?

Tumbuka is a Bantu language spoken by about 2 million in northern and central Malawi, and the Lundazi District of Zambia. The Tumbuka spoken in urban areas differs significantly from what is spoken in rural areas, which is considered by some as the “*real Tumbuka*”. Tumbuka is a Bantu language, similar to the Swahili in structure and vocabulary. The Tumbuka are an ethnic group living in Malawi, Zambia and Tanzania.

The language of the Tumbuka is called the *chiTumbuka*. The ‘chi’ in front of Tumbuka meaning ‘the language of the’ just like ‘ki’ in ‘kiSwahili’ or ‘se’ in ‘seTswana’.

The World Almanac (1998) estimates that approximately 2,000,000 Tumbuka speakers exist in the aforementioned three countries. Ethnologue estimates a total of 1,332,000 Tumbuka speakers, including 940,000 in the Malawi and 392,000 in the Zambia, with no Tumbuka presence listed for Tanzania.



Malawian Traditional

WHY STUDY TUMBUKA?

The Tumbuka language is a Bantu language which is spoken in parts of Malawi, Zambia, and Tanzania. Chi-tumbuka has had a history of mixed fortunes in modern Malawi. First, the language received tremendous support from the pioneer Scottish missionaries of the Livingstonia Mission who arrived in Northern Region of Malawi in the 1860s. However, during the first thirty years of Malawi’s independence, the Chitumbuka was marginalized by a political system that was run on the philosophy of one nation, one language. At the time of Malawi’s attainment of political independence from Britain in 1964, English, in conjunction with two local languages - Chinyanja and Chitumbuka - were the official languages.



Mgunda Traditional Dance



People of Malawi



Malawi Tumbuka Women



Tumbuka Boys