

will attempt to incorporate established categorizations in attributing an order to masking. The most general category is that which divides masks into three separate forms: large constructions, wooden carved masks, feathered and hide masks.

The large constructions are more closely linked with ritual power and derive their hierarchical place from this link. These masks are more sacred and less visible in that they are most often performed at a distance or at night, and they command entry into the *bwalo*, waiting for no man or other mask.

Njobvu is an example of a mask form with high status in the overall hierarchy of masks and in the values derived from specific comments by Nyau members. Njobvu is considered more sacred than other masks, is performed rarely and in the case of initiations more secretly; commands to perform and performs at a further distance from noninitiates than the more common masks. Njobvu is rarely performed in the Gule Wamkulu, being the mask form which is least commonly seen, or in other words, has the fewest appearances of all the forms in this study.

Within this category of large constructions there is another hierarchy. Njobvu is linked most clearly with the power of chiefs as well as ritual power, and thus the mask is the most respected. Kasinyamaliro and Chimkoko are more visible than Njobvu. However, they are the mask forms used most often in ritual, and therefore have a higher place in the role they play than all the other large constructions. Arguably, new additions such as Galimoto (motor car) are the least important, having no ritual role, no gender or age, and being

recent adaptations in contrast to the gendered animal forms which are deemed to be the forms used by the ancestors long ago.

The second category of masks are the wooden carved masks. Within this category there are several prominent mask forms with various values attributed to them. This category is, perhaps, the most complex with each mask in a given genre assuming differing values (such as the old and young Maria). The carved masks are generally more important than the hide and feathered ones, and less important than the animal constructions. Yet it might be asserted that Galimoto is actually less important than the old Maria and the Chadzunda. Carved masks are less sacred than the large constructions. Some carved masks are respected and feared and others are not, and some are permitted in the *bwalo* by the event organizer and others enter the *bwalo* commanding to perform. The masks are very visible; they are meant to be seen by day in the Gule Wamkulu.

The third category of feathered, hide and cloth masks is generally always assigned the lowest place in the hierarchy of masks. However, Kasinja and Kachipapa are considered more important than the lesser carved masks such as Pedegu. Both Kasinja and Kachipapa have ritual roles as well as the ability to "speak" unlike the carved mask forms.

Masks in this category include those with roles of low status such as messengers and guards. Some of these masks are not performed in the Gule Wamkulu at all. They are the most visible and accessible in the village, and the most common mask forms. These masks are often performed



Fig. 8: The three different kinds of simple cloth and feathered mask forms are messengers announcing a dance event. The masked dancer on the left resembles Kasinja or Kachipapa, the one in the center is a Kapoli and the one on the right is Pwanyanya or Duli. The latter carries *chibongo*, a weapon very much like the Zulu knobkerrie.