

## THE WAYEYI

Originally, the Wayeyi lived in Central Africa (around western Zambia). In 1750, the Lozi chief demanded tribute payment from the Wayeyi. Led by Hankuzi, this peace-loving group of hunters, fishermen and farmers moved to the Ngamiland area to escape the extortion. Migrating down along the Zambezi River, they settled in the Chobe and Linyanti regions. The link between the Okavango and Chobe Rivers during the flooding periods facilitated their move into the Okavango Delta.

In this area in Northern Botswana, these matrilineal Bantu-speaking people intermarried with the original people living in the area, the Wawuya (San). They lived happily together and later regarding them as their cousins.

On their arrival, they depended on agricultural products and wild berries from trees such as zinshika and moqoma (papyrus) or from water plants like mweende (water lily). The papyrus is used for making traditional mats and also in the construction of a raft called "uzhendje". They also made items such as baskets, canoes, and pots.

## THE OKAVANGO DELTA

Flowing from the Angola plateau, the Okavango is a perennial river. Further into the Ngamiland area it breaks up into numerous streams forming the delta.

The wild berries and rich vegetation of the area provided a livelihood for the early settlers as it does for people today. Different plants such as zhishika, mweende (water lilies), reeds, and papyrus permeate the river. Profuse wildlife fills the delta area such as hippos, crocodiles, eagles and over thirty species of edible fish.

## SEASONS

The flow of the seasons as well as the annual flooding of the river determines the life of the Wayeyi. The signals of the seasons are traditionally noted by use of trees and stars to determine the appropriate ploughing, fishing and hunting periods.

Among the identified stars are Shiphorophosho, a cluster of stars seen towards the east sometime in August. Indicating the beginning of the ploughing season it is said that the bigger the cluster, the better the harvest for the year. Another star, Khweegcini, affirms the rising sun and it is praised as “nyena mayiwa” — mother of the sun. It shows fishing time has come. Fish begin moving at night towards the main streams of the river in order to eat. Fishermen then set their traps and nets.

## FISHING

The season dictates which of several methods the Wayeyi employ for catching the more than thirty species of edible fish in the River. Fishing reaches its peak when the water level in the river starts to rise during flood periods of April and May, about two months after the rains stop.

Among the methods used are:

- ◆ The fishing trap - Nteta
- ◆ The fishing net - Kazhawa
- ◆ Fish poisoning for stunning the fish. - Ubi

Nteta, a form of fishing trap, is made by pushing reeds into the bottom of the stream to form a fence. In several places, traps are set such that when a fish finds its way in it cannot get out. The portion that faces the incoming water is curved inward forming a cone-shaped kraal of sorts.

Briskly flowing water during flooding season is needed for the nteta to be effective, so when the level of water has peaked in the streams, nteta is no longer used. The fishermen then resort to the fishing nets.

The fishing net is made traditionally from mogqwi fibers (sanseviera). The natural white color frightens the fish. The fibers are dyed black by dipping them into a solution containing kapuura roots. The blackened nets do not repel the fish.

As a shallow or medium water-fishing tool, the nets are woven with various mesh sizes. The size is measured according to the number of fingers one can place into the opening or eye - ildisho. For example, the fishing nets called “kachiaxhe” are known as number five since all five fingers fit into the opening. Whereas, “kakhuahe” is known as a number three size net.

In July, during winter, the streams start drying up, uweero and fish poisoning are used. Uweero is a trap in which a trench is dug joining streams from areas that have water. The fish is trapped in the passage since it is only able to reach the stream through the dug trenches.

Fish poisoning involves grinding ukayi and shikanami plants into a powder and spreading it in an area that may contain fish. The lethargic fish float to the surface to be taken from the water. These poisons are non-toxic to humans or cattle.

## **AGRICULTURE**

Traditionally, the Wayeyi ploughed small fields using hand hoes. These fields provided them only with enough food for a subsistence basis. Ploughing was to begin when the leaves of the wuwara and woncoro trees started emerging.

As technology changed yokes, sleigh, and other tools were developed. Fields were expanded and yields increased. Sorghum, maize, beans, pumpkins, melons and other crops are now produced.

After the rains start and the ploughing completed the Wayeyi concentrate on fishing, hunting and gathering of fruits, berries and other items.

In December during the rains the zinswa (termites) are ready to be trapped. Water is poured on the hill in order

to drive the termites out. The termites are gathered, fried and ground into a paste to be eaten.

## **HUNTING**

Two common methods used for hunting were tjiira (the barbed harpoon) and rewawo (the open pit). Today these methods are no longer used due to legal restrictions.

Tjiira, a harpoon type spear with barbs, was used for killing hippos. Hippos leave the water to feed frequently using the same path on the way to their grazing grounds. The hunter would stand on the side of the path. Two small poles were placed as an arch along the path that the hippo knocked over as he passed. This signaled the hunter that the hippo was near.

As a spear-like weapon, the wooden handle of the tjiira was used to drive the barbed head into the body of the hippo. One rope was tied from the spearhead to the handle, and another from the handle to the papyrus stems. Other hunters then assisted with killing the animal with additional spears.

Rewawo, the open pit, was dug according to the size of the animal being hunted. The depth was usually about two meters deep and the length could be long enough to accommodate three zebras. The walls

were smooth to prevent the animals from climbing out. Branches, leaves and grasses were used to cover up the pit. This method was used for any kind of animal -- even elephants.

## **ARTS AND CRAFTS**

While men are involved in the production of tools, hunting implements and boats, women produce such items as baskets, mats, jewelry, clothing and cooking utensils.

Baskets and mats are crafted from palm tree leaves and papyrus leaves. At times, these fibers are twisted into strands and ropes first. Tree bark and other natural substances are used to dye the leaves and decorate the mats and baskets. Patterns taken from nature to imitate the tracks and movements of animals and birds help to create some of the most intricate and fascinating baskets in the world.

Jewelry and clothing are crafted from animal skins, beads and porcupine quills. These are still worn today for such traditional dances of the Wayeyi as the female initiation rite (inshembiro).

Cooking utensils such as clay pots and bowls are formed from the clay found in the delta region and fired using cow dung.

## Pronunciation

Dental click - sound made to indicate pity “tsk, tsk”	c - cere
Alveolar click - sound made on roof of mouth	q - iqawa
Lateral click - sound made to make a horse move	x - ixaa
Apico Dental click	qc - maqcaa
Between a “b” and “w”, lips not touching	w -
ch as in church	tjh
t as in take	th
p as in peach	ph
dg as in budge	dj
a as in father	a
e as in they	e
ee as in deep	i
o as in boat	o
u as in rude	u

## Greetings

Good morning (sg)	Utishire
(pl)	Ni tishire
How are you? ( am) (sg)	Ma tambuka
(am) (pl)	Na tambuka
I am fine	Nda tambuka
We have met (earlier today)	Ta shangana
We met (before today)	Ta taa shangana
Goodbye (afternoon) (sg)	Urashara
(afternoon) (pl)	Ni rashara
Goodbye(evening) (sg)	Utamboswa
(evening) (pl)	Ni tamboswa
Sleep well (sg)	Rara naqa / Uturo
(pl)	Ti rare naqa
Did you see the sun rise?	Na ldi iqeywa
Yes, I saw the sun rise	Ii, ta ldi iqeywa

The Wayeyi people greet each other with a handshake. If it has been some time since the two have seen each other, they will raise each others hand in the air two times and kiss it on the back of the hand. They will also blow into each others ears to wish them luck.

## Basic Expressions

What is your name?	Ldina ldwee ndji yani?
My name is . . .	Me ndji . . .
Where do you come from?	Ikure ma ti dzwa?
I come from . . .	I koo . . . nda ti dzwa.
Where do you work?	Ikure u rasi?
I work at . . .	I koo . . . ndi rasi
Where are you going?	Ikure ma teenda?
I am going to . . .	I koo . . . nda teenda.
When did you come to Botswana?	Ingene ma taa ya ku Wutswana?
I came to Botswana on. . .	Nda taa ya ku Wutswana shi . . .
With whom did you come to Botswana?	Ini yani ma taa ya ko Wutswana?
I came with . . .	Nda taa ya ni . . .
Do you speak Shiyeyi?	U ku hweta Shiyeyi?
How many children do you have?	Awana wee wa ldeeti?
I have . . . children.	Awana wanga wa . . .
I have one child.	Ndi na mupundi u chiki.
Do you like Botswana?	U siine Wutswana?
Yes, I like Botswana very much?	Ii, ndi siine Wutswana

## Basic Expressions

I do speak Shiyeyi.	I ndi ku hweta Shiyeyi.
I don't speak Shiyeyi.	Kandi hweta Shiyeyi.
I speak only a little Shiyeyi.	I ndi ku hweta Shiyeyi zinceenine.
Yes	Ii
No	Iyemwa / Ee
Please	Nda kambiiri
Excuse me / Sorry	U mpatire
I do not know.	Ka ndi yizire.
I understand.	Nda ti yivuruka / nda yuvu
I don't understand.	Ndi muqhu ku yivuruka.
Say that again.	Hweta nangweza
I see.	Nda ti mwana / nda mono.
No problem.	Ku qhu uzuwo.
Do you have a problem?	U na wukukutu / uzuwo?
I have a problem.	Ndi na wukukutu.
Thank you (sg)	Nda kumbiiri
(pl)	Ta kumbiiri
I want to come back.	Nda ti shaka ku ka shuuka.
I will see you again.	Itje ndi ku mwene nangweza

## Basic Expressions

It is nice.	Ku tjabatja
It is OK.	Ku qa / ku shaama.
What time is it?	Rusuku ruri?
It is . . . o'clock.	I . . . qioo.
Where?	Kure? / Ikure?
When?	Ngini?
How?	Akyare? Ikyare?
Who?	I yane?
What?	Shikya?
Come here.	Ya kuni
Sit down.	Sikama
Come in.	Ndjena
Greeting from gate or door	qo qo
Speak slowly.	Hweta shi uk'u
this week	itjhipi yo panii
next week	itjhipi yi ya tiya
this month	ukwezi ko panii
next month	ukwezi ku kwa tiya
this year	namwaka
next year	umwaka wu wa tiya
last year	mwakaldi

to ask/ to beg	ku rungira
to bring	ku twara
to take	ku yisa
to give	ku pa
to steal / to know	ku yiwa
to speak	ku hweta
to dance	ku zana
to sit	ku sikama
to learn	ku rayaaya
to see	ku mwana
to move	ku shera
to find	ku yana
to pick up	ku thwara
to want/ to look for	ku shaka
to like / to love	ku suna
to fight	ku rwana
to sing	ku yimba
to eat	ku lda
to hunt	ku tanda
to cook	ku kerika
to go	ku yenda

## Shopping

Can you help me?	Ni u ndi raqaa?
Can I help you?	Ndi ku iqa?
Do you want help?	Mati shaka ku iqaaywa?
How much does it cost?	Tjinii wu ldeeti?
Do you have change?	Una ni tjhentjhe?
How much altogether?	Wu ldeeti koozo?
Where is the bank?	Ikure ibanka yina / kure?
It is too expensive.	Shi turu.
It is cheap.	Shi tjhipa
I want to buy this.	Nda ti shaka ku wura tjinii.
I don't have any money.	Ndi mu qhu maropa.
I don't want it.	Ndi mu qhu ku shi shaka.
I don't want anything.	Ndi mu qhu ku shaka itjimwe
Do you want anything else?	Itjimwe ma ti shaka?
Where can I find . . .?	Ikure ndi na ku mwana . . .?
I want to buy . . .	Nda ti shaka ku wura . . .
basket / baskets	shiteko / ziteko
leather goods	zezi shikayi
jewelry	tu kungo indji ziuldi
grass mats	matjatja
bead work	ziuldi
pottery bowl	uncu

## Shopping

Where is the nearest . . . ?	Ikure . . . yina?
bookshop	ibinkiri yeyi zinkwaro
chemist/ pharmacy	indjuwo yeyi wuldisa amanga
grocery store	ibinkiri yeyi zilduwa
fruit stand	ibinkiri yeyi zildimalda
butchery	ibinkiri yeyi inyama
photo shop	ibinkiri yeyi zinepe
restaurant	ibinkiri yeyi zilduwa ze zi kerika
bar	ibinkiri yeyi uwara
hardware store	ibinkiri yeyi zigxaaho
post office	e poso
Do you have a larger size?	Una she shi kando?
Do you have a smaller size?	Una she shi ncenee?
What is this made of?	Tjini shi si shi shikya?
bone	kafupa
stone	shiwe
ivory	risinga ru undjovo
horn	risinga
wood	kakuni
clay	ldima
It is good, I am going.	Ku shaama, ndeendi.

## Common Words

right	naqa / ink'amu
wrong	ubi
old	kuru
young	ncene
beautiful	uqa
ugly	mubi
good	uqa
bad	ubi
inside	muni inkyo
outside	koo kundje
up	ku lduuru
down	peeshi
before	ku wuso
after	ku ldiqo
now	panii
then	ku dzwa po
here	panii
there	panaa
with	shi / sha / na
without	paqho

## Common Words

big	kuru / kando / gquldi
small	ncene / mutje / shitje
early	taandzi /ku fuma
late	ldiqo
cheap	ku tjhipa
expensive	туру
near	shifupi
far	shire
hot	pisa
cold	totura
full	yira
open	yazura
shut	yaziya
today	namushi
yesterday	iworo
tomorrow	ldatitja
in the early morning	makhwenqcumu madana
in the morning	makhwenqcumu
in the afternoon	makhuncumu
at sunset	shiqcapa
at night	masuku

## Eating Out

Do you have...?	Una . . . maropa?/una uldeeti?
fish	inshwi
lamb	uguana
steak	shichutuka
beetroot	ibitiruti
carrots	ikheroti
spinach	shipinashi
tomatoes	zitamati
tomato sauce	itamati sosi
pumpkin	ldidorombira
mango	imengu
watermelon	ldik'atjama
beer	uwara
milk	mashuta
meat	inyama
potatoes	ziputata
cabbage	ikhabetji
rice	iraisi
beans	meemba
apples	ziapule
oranges	ziorendji

## Traveling

Where can I get a boat to the delta?	Ikure ndi na ku mwana owoto wo wa hingi moni inda?
Are there animals in the delta?	Kuna wanyauya moni inda?
How long does the journey take?	Ku yisa rusuku ro ru ldeeti?
Can you recommend a sightseeing tour?	Na undi ziire ko ku ndina ku ka mwana?
Where does the car start from?	Umutukara ikure a tanga?
Will it pick us up at the lodge?	Naoati yisa papu shiroo?
How much does the tour cost?	Kunda ni ko nwana wu ldeeti?
Is there an English speaking guide?	Pana mukita ndjira yuu yizire Shikhuwa?
What is his name?	Ldina ldake ndji yani?
Fill it up please.	Shi yiza mbiyaa?
Please check the oil.	Mbiya ldaaya amazi?
I need air in my tires.	Nda ti shaka umuko moni mincu u lori anga.

## Traveling

Where are you going? Ikure ma hingi?

I am going . . . I koo bwaga . . . nda hingi

I am asking the way? Ndati rungira indjira?

Is drinking water available? Ami ukunwa a sise?

Do you know anyone who can put us up for a night? Uyizire yu una ku tipa mararo?

Is there a campsite near here? Pana shiro shifupi pani?

Is there a tourist office? Kuna utisi wo wa wayoni?

We are here for a few days. Ti na pani mayiwa nga matj'e.

May I take you home? Ndi ku tware koo nqwaaywe?

Where shall we meet? Ikure itje ti shangane?

Can I see you tomorrow? Itje ndi ku mwene nangweza ldi lda titja?

I'm afraid we must go now. She shibi ku ku tikya ta teenda.

How far is it? Wure wowo ldeeti?

It is not far. Iyemwaa shire.

It is very far. Shire nanyina.

## Health

I need a doctor quickly.	Nda ti shaka mupandzi kashunu.
I don't feel well.	Ndi mu qhu a ti ndi ku ldi yivwa naqa.
Is there a doctor who speaks English?	Pana mupandzi yuu hweta Shikhuwa?
I have a pain here.	Ndina shikotuka panii.
Where does it hurt?	I pare pa ti masiza?
What is the trouble?	Mulduu shi kya?
I feel . . .	Nda ti ivwa . . .
dizzy	kazungaare
nauseous	ku shasha ku inda
diarrhea	ku ta
feverish	tjatjaldika
I have a heart condition.	Nda ti masizwa ku umoyo
I am allergic to . . .	Nda ti shitwa ku zinshwa. . .
I need this medicine.	Nda ti shaka u wanga wunii.
You have malaria.	Mati <b>mashira ung'ando.</b>
I need a dentist.	Nda ti shaka mupandzi a meno.
I have broken my glasses.	Nda <b>qcapura zihalasi zanga.</b>
I have a toothache.	Nda ti masizwa ku ildino.
How much do I owe you?	Wu ldeeti nda yisa pawe?
May I have a receipt?	Na undi pe ireshiti?
Thank you for your help.	Nda <b>kumbiiri mandi iqaa.</b>

## Anatomy

head – moshoro hair - zishwishi	face – wuso
scalp – shithizho	eye - ildisho
ear – kuti	nose - ldiyiro
beard – zinde dzo	mouth – shipoo
neck - insungo	cheek – lditama
	jaw – zimboni
	chin - shiredzo
shoulder - ldiqawa	
back - mushana	chest - shidzuwa
	breast – mayere
arm – engoro	ribs - zimpati
elbow - rikokuna	stomach - wora
waist - shiwunu	navel – shikombo
buttocks - matako	pubic area - shicako
	hand - ldandja
	fingers - mine
leg - muncu	
thigh - shiyero	
	knee - ldidzi
calf - inshafu	shin - rimandi
foot - shikondo	ankle - kanqami
heel - shisisina	toes - mine e zikondo

Add disabilities:

deaf – moporo  
blind – mopofa  
ku sheza – to walk on ones buttocks  
left handed – momosho

## Animals

snake	innywaka / zinywaka
python	imboma / zimboma
crocodile	ung'andu/ wang'andu
turtle	infuru / zinfuru
buffalo	unyati / wanyati
quinea fowl	inkanga / zinkanga
hippopotamus	unvuvu / wanvuvu
lion	undavu / wandavu
elephant	undjovo / wadjovo
leopard	ungwe / wangwe
monkey	unshoko / wanshoko
frog	utjura / matjura
wildcat	ugqomo / waggomo
wildebeast	undzudzu/ wandzudzu
sable	uqhwa / waqhwa
warthog	ungiri / wangiri
kudu	undzwa / wandzwa
leewe	undya / wandya
impala	umpara / wampara
statunga	undzodzo / wadzodzo

## Animals

baboon	uwurutwa / mawurutwa
cow	eng'ombe / zing'ombe
donkey	udongi / madongi
sheep	ugu / magu
cat	ugqomo / magqomo
dog	umbwa / wambwa
horse	umbiyi / wambiyi
goat	umphene / wamphene
chicken	unkuku / wankuku
bull	unthuldi / wathuldi
zebra	umbiyi / wambiyi
giraffe	unvveshe / wanvveshe
rhino	untjhunguzu / watjhunguzu
hyena	umpuru / wampuru
hawk	utshatshuwa / matshatshuwa
osprey	inkhwezi/ zinkhwezi
eagle	inandzi / zinandzi
heron	haciya / wahaciya
hummingbird	uwomba / mawomba
goose	ushweke / mashweke
duiker	ugqwii / wagqwii

## Relationships

my mother	ima
your mother	nyoko
his / her mother	nyina
my father	tate
your father	sho
his / her father	she
my son / daughter	mwananga
your son / daughter	monwee
his / her son / daughter	mwanake
my elder sibling	mukuranga
my younger sibling	muzatanga
grandfather	baba
grandmother	nakuranga
my husband	waanga
my wife	mukazanga
my uncle (father's older brother)	shukuranga
my aunt(mother's older sister)	mashimupundi / kando
my cousin	indzaraanga

**Common Names**  
**Men**

Hakudze	Happier
Zaambo	disputes
Ngoma	drum
Mathemwa	the chooser
Harishando	the father of suffering
Uvuya	slavery
Hamuchiki	the lone one
Mutandzi	the hunter
Rudjuwu	the paddler
Thewa	the think one
Karapo	the remaining one
Shiqoti	the bark
Zaanakana	thoughts/ideas
Qhuldina	no name
Rweendo	journey
Saaza	leave some/left overs
Tembwe	we are yours
Zankeeri	they are left with me
Ldiimbo	ruin

**Women**      **Muguniywa**

Khiana  
Rumbe  
Shandi  
Shazi  
Shwezi / Mishwezi  
Shweena  
Wanga  
Ldatja

misfortune  
little lots or dice  
suffering  
the lone one  
tears  
hate  
mine  
it has risen  
the happy one  
what can I do to them

Kariwuzza – it does not ask  
Koi – in the wilderness  
Narefo – the mother of death  
Yarubi- the one who came at a bad time  
Nacamu – the mother of pleasure  
Mbura – kill me  
Ngonye – fist  
Saywa – the one who is hated  
Shiwuya – the bushman way of doing things  
Tshodzo – grass  
Tshukano – separation  
Zihweta – talks  
Pheegxe – the one outside  
Woogxe – lonely one  
Ndjiraaro – its path  
Zita – the hidden ones  
Shazi – the unrelated one  
Kwamashazi- the relative to the unrelated one  
Shendje – waterbuck

Museeldira – the one left alone  
Shandi – the sufferer  
Mwaka – year  
Nazitama-the mother of dimples  
Shando – suffering  
Cere – the small one  
Shipiya – the new one

### Months

January  
February  
March  
April  
May  
June  
July  
August

September	Katikhoo
October	Kayambeyu
November	Utindjiro
December	Umundji

### Days of the Week

Sunday	Uyirika
Monday	Uchiki
Tuesday	Uyiri
Wednesday	Utaatu
Thursday	Unee
Friday	Ushano
Saturday	Uqa

### Numbers

Kurume	0
Kukazimazuwa	1
Kuyuwa	2
Kukunguure	3
Shikukutu	4
Quldiya	5
Kavuruvusa	6
Ndjiwaazakakuni	7

8	Uvundja uyiri
9	Uvundja uchiki
10	Ldikumi
11	Ldikumi ni uchiki
12	Ldikumi ni uyiri
20	Makumi ayiri
30	Makumi a taato
40	Makumi a nee
50	Makumi a ushano
100	Makumi a makumi
1000	makumi a makumi a makumi

first	kataandzi
second	kayiri
third	kataato

once	kachiki
twice	kayiri

half	shigqa
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Ku qhu
Uchiki
Uyiri
Utaato
Unee
Ushano
Uvundja uneye
Uvundja utaato

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