



Cultural Astronomy in Zambia: Insights from Different Tribes

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OUTLINE

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INTRODUCTION.

Cultural astronomy focuses on how different cultures understand, interpret and interact with the sky. The most prominent celestial bodies they used are the Moon, Sun and Stars.

- They used these to predict
 - Time
 - Seasons
 - Spiritual practices
 - Cultural practices



Credit: Rastan 2001

OVERVIEW

AIM: To document and analyse indigenous knowledge among different tribes of Zambia

Objectives

- Compare cultural Astronomical knowledge with modern astronomy.
- Understand and interpret traditional beliefs about the universe.
- Examining how these beliefs influence agriculture, time, season etc.

METHODOLOGY

We used quantitative approaches.

- Interviews
- Oral Traditions
- Assignments
- Ethnoastronomy
- Archaeoastronomy



RESULTS

The moon and diseases

- Tilted crescent new moon - hold nothing.
 - Diseases poured off.
 - Disease free month.
- Upward crescent moon- hold diseases.
 - Outbreak of diseases
 - Elders prepare traditional medicine.



Credit: Dwight D. Eisenhower 1958

The moon and rain season

- When the new moon appears, expect perpetual rainfall.
- The rain is washing and strengthening moon.
- Full moon, dry spells are expected.

The moon and sexy of the baby

- Conceiving when there is a new moon - the baby is female
- Whenever there's a full moon - the baby is male
- Stillborn.

The sun and time

- Shadow time.
 - Morning, Midday
 - Afternoon

The sun and seasons

- Movement of the sun is used to predict seasons.
 - The Hot Dry Season
 - Rain Season
 - The Cool Dry Season



Stars

- Shooting stars are believed to be a witch or wizard flying in the sky.
- Stars are believed to be souls of the departed ones.
- When the star is seen close to the moon, it's time to find a lover as stars are believed to be married to the moon.



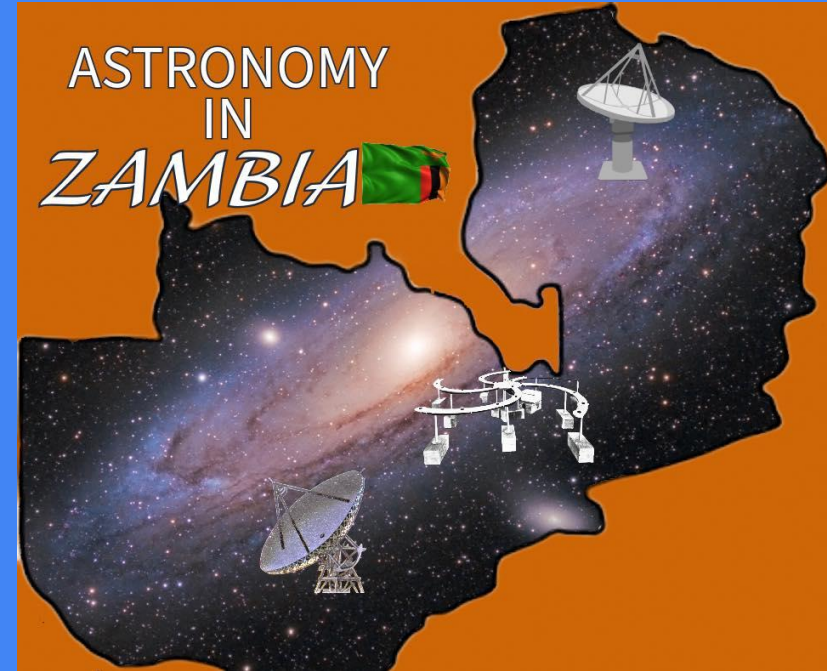
Credit: Bonnie North, Jean Creighton 2018.



Credit: Chakaran Wattana Mongkol 2022

CONCLUSION

Studying cultural astronomy will make us better understand the science behind the ancient arts, myths and rituals in relation to celestial bodies and it affects day to day life. Hence the need to promote interest and awareness in modern astronomy across Africa.



FUTURE WORKS

- **Documentation** : come up with a book
- **Educational Integration**: Integrating cultural knowledge with modern astronomy.
- **Policy**: Curriculum Development Centre to recognize the value of cultural astronomy.
- **Academic Collaboration**: Developing partnerships.

Thank You !!!