

# Amai Mandida

## Woman, You Love Me

Inu amai mandida ine

You, woman, you love me

Mandida chiyani?

Why do you love me?

Popeza ndalama ndilibe

I do not have the money

Zokwelela sitima

With which to board the train

Kodi amama mandida ine

You love *me*, woman??

Mandida chiyani?

Why do you love me?

Popeza ndalama ndilibe

I do not have the money

Zokwelela sitima

With which to board the train

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You love *me*, woman??

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With which to board the train

Kuyenda kwathu

To go to my home

Dziko la Malawi

The country of Malawi

Dziko labwino

The beautiful country

Dziko lopanda mabhambu

The country without bumpy roads

Guitar solo

Zoona amai mandida

Truly, woman, you love me  
Mandida chiyani?  
Why do you love me?  
Popeza makobili ndilibe  
I do not have the coin  
Okwelela sitima  
With which to board the train

Zoona amai mandida  
Truly, woman, you love me  
Mandida chiyani?  
Why do you love me?  
Popeza makobili ndilibe  
I do not have the coin  
Okwelela sitima  
With which to board the train

Zoona amai mandida  
Truly, woman, you love me  
Mandida chiyani?  
Why do you love me?  
Popeza ndalama ndilibe  
I do not have the money  
Zokwelela sitima  
With which to board the train

Kuyenda kwathu  
To go to my home  
Dziko la Malawi  
The country of Malawi  
Dziko labwino  
The beautiful country  
Dziko lopanda mabhambu  
The country without bumpy roads

Ndikuuza ose anga oyenda ali muno  
I am telling all those here who are going (back home)  
Ukamva munhu akuti "Lowa, lowa"  
If you hear a person saying "Come in, come in"  
Usamalowe munyumba, achimwene  
Don't go into that house, friend  
Akupa kungati chinjoka chalowa munyumba  
They will kill you like a snake that has gotten into the house  
Muno tabwelela ndalama ife  
We came here to look for money  
Ukagula bhachi akubela, tu  
If you take off your jacket they will steal it!  
Ukapeza ndalama, usunge  
If you find money, tie it up  
Zopitisa kumudzi  
You will use it to go back home

Achimwene, achimwene

Friend, friend

Muno ndimoyenda

Here we are foreigners

Muzidyewa bwino

Be eaten well (don't overspend on the ladies)

Mawa muri kuyenda

Tomorrow you are going

Achimwene, achimwene

Friend, friend

Muno ndimoyenda

Here we are foreigners

Muzidyewa bwino

Be eaten well (don't overspend on the ladies)

Mawa muri kuyenda

Tomorrow you are going

In the 1940's and 50's, a lot of Malawian people – mostly men – came to Zimbabwe to look for work in the mines and on the farms. Most of these people never went back home.

The first part of the song is addressed to a Zimbabwean woman who has fallen in love with a Malawian man. In most Southern African cultures, part of the marriage process involves the bride-to-be going with her paternal aunt and a sister to “see” (that is, visit and meet) the future husband's home (*kunoona musha*, in Shona) and extended family; this is done before the payment of the bride-price. The purpose of this practice is for her to be introduced to the groom-to-be's extended family.

This man is under pressure to take his lady and her entourage to see his home in Malawi, and he is saying he does not have the money to make that trip happen. She loves him, she expects marriage in the culturally acceptable way, and he cannot deliver.

The spoken part of the song is advice to foreigners in the country. The narrator (not necessarily the same forlorn lover who was singing earlier) is warning the workers to be wary of temptations that come, especially in the form of ladies of the night (that is, prostitutes.) “If you hear a person saying ‘come in’, don't go in” – meaning if a lady of the night invites you in, refuse. “They will kill you like a snake” – they will take you for all you have got, even the jacket you came in wearing. (If one sees a snake in their house they beat it until there is no doubt that it is dead, which, in the context of this metaphor, translates to literally stripping the victim bare.)

He reminds them that they came to Zimbabwe to look for money, and they should not spend all that they make. Rather, they should put it away in a safe place (tie it up) so that they have enough funds to – among other possibilities, such as taking potential fiancées to meet the family – go back home and live off of. When somebody “eats” you, it means they spend your money at will. Their only reason for being in a relationship with you is the financial gain; once the money is finished they are gone. So being “eaten well” means being careful with the ladies you spend money on and the amount of money spent: choose the right beneficiaries for your munificence, and have a limit, don't let them suck you dry.

One last note on the lyric about “The country without bumpy roads”: this is a sentimental statement on the part of the singer. Even though he had to leave his home country (likely due to drought and related or independent economic woes) to find work, Malawi has better-maintained roads than

Zimbabwe does – especially in the mining communities this song’s narrator was presumably working in – and the latter’s are making him homesick and nostalgic for the smooth roads in his patria.

Languages: Shona / Nyanja / Chewa

Songwriters: Zexie Manatsa & The Green Arrows

Original Album: Chipo Chiroorwa LP

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