Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Myth of the Origin of Dja and Mpomo Rivers by Bernard Kos Mbulu", peer-reviewed by Eleanor A. Dasi and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/155. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Bernard Kos Mbulu

Myth of the Origin of Dja and Mpomo Rivers

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods Metamorphosis



Dja River. By Amcaja — own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, Wikimedia Commons (accessed: September 30, 2022).

General information	
Title of the work	Myth of the Origin of Dja and Mpomo Rivers
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Zimes
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	September 5, 2017
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Madouma- Lomie
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
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Creators



Bernard Kos Mbulu (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 72 (in 2017)

Social status: 3rd Class Chief

Profession: Farming

Language of narration: Zimes

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background*: Lomie is a village located in the Upper Nyong Division. It got its name from a man who visited his maternal uncle and consumed an animal called “mi” in his local language. Particularly, he consumed the head, locally known as “lo”. Then, he named the place “Lomi”, after the animal and the part he consumed. The principal activity there is agriculture and they are predominantly polygamous, with a patriarchal system in place.

Occasion: Staged performance

* See also globalbushtratour.com (accessed: April 23, 2019).

Summary

A long time ago, far back into the beginning of life on earth, when men could barely distinguish between good and evil after they had been sent out of the celestial home to live on earth, God started feeling lonely without his children, the humans. Every morning, he peeped through his window to check their evolution and look after them.

One day, Ziem, the God of the Land, was strolling around his terrace and admiring satisfactorily the progress of his children on earth. On that day, he had a smile as he would never ever had. Ziem daydreamt about how well his creatures were adapting to their new environment. Perhaps he was envisioning their future, perhaps he was reviewing what next will happen in their lives, or perhaps he was previewing our era.

On that day, Akpe, the daughter of Aysebam and Mbadob, one of our ancestors, went to fetch water in the river to wash the game brought from a hunting expedition by her father, the greatest hunting warrior of all times. She was a young girl of extraordinary beauty and unparalleled splendour. She had beautiful long legs, round breasts, a fine face and a hypnotising gait. Ziem noticed and admired her so much so that he kept his eyes on her from then on; he fell crazily in love with her. God fell in love with a daughter of man! This love destabilised him to the extent that he decided to seduce her. But he

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was handicapped by his inability to become human and descend to earth, and also he had vowed never to take a human into heaven since he had sworn long ago that only gods and spirits could reside there. So, he spent days thinking until when, he found a trick tip to have Akpe for him all alone. He transformed into a giant snake and appeared in the girl's dreams every night. By so doing, he started his seduction game till he made her melt with love for him. Soon, Akpe became pregnant and there began the story of our forefathers. The young girl got pregnant to Ziem, knowing neither how it happened nor how to tell it to her parents. She knew her destiny was sealed; that hers was different from those of other young girls of her age who had been expecting valuable suitors that will make their parents happy. She felt her world collapsing as the pregnancy meant unhappiness and a cruel destiny which she had not envisaged.

In fact, Akpe was destined to a sad fate. She was expelled from home when her pregnancy became visible and was rejected by all. Outcast, she spent the days of her pregnancy in the forest that the giant snake had prepared for her. There, she was delicately taken care of by spirits. All her family members and friends forgot her except a man called Gbaminé who had been coveting her since her tender years. The latter assumed that she had joined the father of her child and secretly planned revenge. Akpe gave birth to twins whom she named Mpomo and Dja. They were demigods. Soon after the delivery, Akpe lived all alone with her children. This was to avoid any contact between the spirits and humans who were progressively occupying the forest that God had prepared for his sons. She raised her children single-handedly and made sure she transmitted unto them the good manners she had learnt from home; for, though, as it seemed, her people had forgotten everything about her, she warmly kept them in her mind. She spent all of her time in her small paradisiacal compound. Her sons became robust, good-looking, and powerful; so powerful that, in a short period of time, they moved out of their mother's home and became renowned. They too got married to daughters of men and founded a great kingdom whose fame sparked jealousy amongst neighbouring kingdoms and more especially, in the chiefdom of Gbaminé. The latter, who had been enthroned chief, felt it was time to accomplish his revenge and wipe the disgrace he had lived in because of Akpe. Thus, he sent spies and emissaries to the two brothers' and their mother's kingdom. There, they met an ally called Assamela. Animated by the spirit of revenge on one side and of jealousy on the other, they planned the destruction of the kingdom of

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the demigods.

One night, the allies surprisingly assailed the twins from both sides of their kingdom. Though the battle was tough, they fought bravely. They stood strong for their children and for their riches. They fought so hard that, in the early morning, they were tired and exhausted. Then, they realised with bitterness that their mother, the one to whom they owed the most precious - life, the one who had forsaken everything for them, had been speared and was dying. Before taking her last breath, she told them to keep fighting for their offspring like she had done for them. The boys, bitterly mortified, combated for six days in a war whose origins and essence they did not know. During this period, they witnessed the indiscriminate killing of their offspring from their enemies who had set out to exterminate them. Worn out, they thought it wise to protect what remained of their lives' labour. To accomplish this, they took their divine forms and transformed into snakes that later became two big rivers namely the Dja and the Mpomo. These rivers kept the life of their children safe from an unexplained invasion as they extended all along the two borders of their kingdom thus making it difficult for the two assailants to penetrate. Consequently, the assailants retreated in disappointment and the Koonzime kingdom was safe to this day.

Analysis

The interaction between humanity, gods and spirits is recurrent in most world mythologies. The above myth brings into the limelight the product of such interactions; being sometimes a union between characters from both worlds (celestial and terrestrial) and shape shifting to attain certain objectives. Ziem (the God), after transforming into a snake, enters an alliance with Akpe, and the result is their two sons, who are originators of rivers Dja and Mpomo. These interactions do not only show the cordiality between the celestial and the terrestrial world but explain the origin of certain geographical phenomena as many other myths do worldwide.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods Metamorphosis

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Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Appearances Child, children Emotions Family Girls Humanity Love Relationships Religious beliefs Revenge Transformation Violence War Water
Further Reading	*Awele and the Stranger*, Directed by Ogbeh Peter Ogbeh, Media/Film Freelance, 2018. 188 min. (accessed: September 13, 2021). Peek, Philip M. (ed). *Twins in African and Diaspora Cultures: Double Trouble*, Twice Blessed. Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011. *The Deity of Umudike Kingdom*, Directed by Kester Onuigbo, Don Single Ndubuisi Studio « DGN », 2018 (accessed: September 13, 2021).
Addenda	Method of data collection: Tape recording and Note-taking Researcher: Divine Che Neba Research Assistant: Sibouolo Joseline Editor: Eleanor A. Dasi

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