Daniel A. Nkemleke, "Entry on: Kintu by Clyde W. Ford", peer-reviewed by Divine Che Neba and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/176. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Clyde W. Ford

Kintu

United States (1999)

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Hero(es)



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General information	
Title of the work	Kintu
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Uganda
Original Language	Unknown
First Edition Date	1999
First Edition Details	Clyde W. Ford, *The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa*. New York: Bantam Books, 1999, 227 pp.
ISBN	0553105442
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	1999 (date of publication of the book from which the story was summarised)
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	The Baganda region in Uganda
Genre	Myths
Author of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Creators



Clyde W. Ford (Author)

Clyde W. Ford is African-American native of New York City. He is the author of three other books: *Where Healing Waters Meet: Touching Mind and Emotion Through the Body* (1989); *Compassionate Touch: The Body's Role in Healing and Recovery* (1993) and *We CAN All Get Along: 50 Steps You Can Take to Help End Racism* (1993). As a prominent guest speaker on American TV, he has taken part in more than 150 TV shows. He has written numerous articles in journals and newspapers. For more on Ford see here (accessed: July 3, 2018).

Bio prepared by Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Date and place of collection: Unknown. However, Clyde Ford states in the Preface to his book that "the myths in this book come from numerous sources, principally from the published transcriptions and translations of missionaries, ethnographers, and anthropologists" (p. xiii).

Cultural Background*: The Baganda region in Uganda The Baganda, the largest single ethnic group in Uganda, believe in superhuman spirits in the form of mizimu (the spirits of the death that roams the earth), and balubaale (men whose good moral qualities became part of their afterlife attributes). Katonda is their God-head, and is revered as the supreme being who did not father any children nor was himself begotten by man. As part of their tradition, men and women are more respected when they get married; the people fear death and bury the dead after five days; all are supposed to weep for the dead (in order not to be accused of being the cause); they perform rituals to welcome a baby into a family; and, unlike in the past when the king would kill all his sons and leave just the successor, the king, in the contemporary, only selects one of his sons to succeed him.

* Source:

The Bagand Culture, ugandatravelguide.com (accessed: July 9, 2019).

Summary

The full text of this myth is found in: The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa by Clyde W. Ford, in the United States and Canada by Bantam Books, 1999, p. 60). This is only a brief summary of the story. The full text of the myth and others can be read in the book cited above.

Kintu, the super-hero arrives on earth with a cow as his only source of food. Later, Nmabi, daughter of the sky god Gulu visits the earth and immediately falls for Kintu. She tells her father about her desire to be Kintu's wife but her father will not have it. After sometime, Gulu decides to test Kintu's worthiness to marry his daughter. Gulu orders his cow to be stolen. As a result, Kintu almost starves to death but

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	survives it. Then Gulu invites him to the sky kingdom and sets before him an enormous amount of food, Kintu discovers a hole in his room and sinks the food in. Next, the king gives him a copper ax and orders him to spit a log of wood placed on a rock. Kintu gently cuts off pieces of the wood without hitting the rock to the satisfaction of Gulu. Again, he orders Kintu to fill up a water pot with dew, which again he does. Then he asks Kintu to identify his stolen cow from a large herd of identical animals. A mysterious bee helps him by hovering over the horn of his cow. Following this instruction, Kintu succeeds to pick out his cow. Gulu finally concedes, praises him and allows him to marry his daughter.
Analysis	The myth highlights the virtues of courage, determination, wisdom and foresight, which are considered important traits related to heroism and royalty, both in the African and in classical contexts. In most African societies, a young man must show proof of these traits before he can be allowed to marry a girl of royal blood. Kintu is endowed with these qualities as he successfully passes the Sky God's tests, and proves himself worthy of marrying his daughter.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Hero(es)
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Character traits Intellect Love Parents (and children) Religious beliefs Superheroes Values
Further Reading	Hamilton, Edith, *Mythology: Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes*, New York: Warner, 1969.

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