Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Myth of the Origin of the Dii by Marthe Satou", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/436. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Marthe Satou

Myth of the Origin of the Dii

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Myth of the Origin of the Dii
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Saan
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	April 3, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Ngaoundere
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Children (Young adults and adults)
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
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Creators



Marthe Satou (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 60 (in 2018)

Social status: Commoner

Profession: Farming

Language of narration: Saan

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background: The Dii people are found in the Adamaoua Region of Cameroon. They are generally called the Dourou and have about a hundred chiefdoms spread over the foot of the Ngaoundere cliff all the way to Poli, Mbé, and Tcholliré in the North Region. They speak many dialects some of which are saan, paan, naan, huun, mam'bé, mam nà'a and goom. They are also referred to as "the yam people" because they cultivate a lot of yams both for local consumption and for commercial purposes. Apart from yams, they also cultivate groundnuts, tobacco, fiber, cotton, cassava and maize. Some of them practice Islam, some have embraced Christianity while others still cling to their traditional religions.

Occasion: Staged

Summary

The Dii people in general and the blacksmiths in particular are considered to have fallen from the sky. This is convincing given that these people do not share similar cultural attributes with other peoples around them. When the Dii people descended from the sky, they first lived on a mountain called *guu gbang sii*. There, the Dii people did not have any contact with other people as they did not even know if other people existed. They lived on wild foods particularly a variety of millet called "tud sad."

At the foot of this mountain, in a cave, lived the blacksmiths known as the "Nang" (which also means, to rain). The blacksmiths also believed that they fell from the sky with their pincers (*magan*) and their hammer (*mbigi*). They were always working outside the cave but each time they heard a strange noise or felt a foreign body, they retreated into the cave. When the Dii people discovered the blacksmiths, they would often hide and watch them making tools out of metal that they had never seen before. They were marveled. After some time, they thought that they could bring these people who worked with metal close to them. So on a particular day, when these blacksmiths went out for work, the Dii people quietly placed a net at the entrance into the cave. On their return, the blacksmiths were all caught in the net. However, the intention of the Dii was not to subjugate them but to associate and collaborate with them. After a long struggle, the blacksmiths accepted to join the Dii to form a community. However,

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	the physical appearance of the Dii (they had tails) was embarrassing to some of them who, by virtue of that, felt uncomfortable to be with the blacksmiths. They then asked the blacksmiths to cut off their tails so that they should look physically alike. The blacksmiths accepted and used their metal blades to cut off the tails of the Diis. They then live together as a community and today, there is hardly a household in this community without a blacksmith. The Dii strongly believe in this myth and that is why even today, they refer to themselves as "naa peso ag" which means people who fell from the sky.
Analysis	This myth gives an account of the origin of the Dii people, which is necessary for cultural identity. Communities, the world over, use myths to explain their origins and account for unique customs and cultural practices. This particular myth accounts for physical and other differences within their community. It also valorizes multiculturalism, as the other or minority group within the larger group is treated with respect. The myth shows that for a peaceful co-habitation to happen, different cultural groups need to adapt and sacrifice. Groups need to "cut the tails" that embarrass and engender subjectivity in order to fit into larger society.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Appearances Identity Multiculturalism Religious beliefs Respect Society
Further Reading	Azara, Pedro et al., "The Mythical Foundation of Cities" in *The*

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Addenda

Researcher: Divine Che Neba.

Assistant Researcher: Hipeen Samaki Norbert.

Method of data collection: Note-taking.

Editors: Daniel A. Nkemleke and Eleanor A. Dasi.

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