Eleanor A. Dasi, "Entry on: The Bali Creation Myth by Robert Ba Ndangho Fomunyang ", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Divine Che Neba and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/443. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Robert Ba Ndangho Fomunyang

The Bali Creation Myth

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods





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

General information	
Title of the work	The Bali Creation Myth
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Mungaka
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	March 3, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bali, North West Region, Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (Young adults and adults)
Author of the Entry	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com
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Creators



Robert Ba Ndangho Fomunyang (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 80 (in 2018)

Social status: Chief of Mbatmandet village in Bali Nyonga

Profession: Trader

Language of narration: Mungaka

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Bali Nyonga* is a part of the larger Bali Chamba group found in Cameroon and Nigeria. The account that the Bali Nyongas give of themselves is that they came from the Niger on horseback, attacking and defeating other tribes along their path until they finally settled in their present site. This is probably why they are known by their neighbours as a warlike and aggressive group (particularly Mankon, Pinyin, Meta, Bafut, Moghamo, who have been victims of their aggression). Their language, Mungaka, gained prestige during the colonial days as it was used by missionaries for communication and education. Like any other cultural group in the North West Region of Cameroon, the Bali people pray to God through the ancestors. They have a rich cultural heritage which they manifest each year through the Lela Festival.

Occasion: Staged

* See: Bob Ata, *The Bali Nyonga of Cameroon, a story of African Migration*, mediablackberry.com (accessed: August 20, 2018).

Summary

In the beginning, Nikob (God) created the world and left it empty for a relatively long period of time. One day, he spread seeds of trees everywhere on earth. The trees grew so fast into different types and sizes. Among the so many types of trees Nikob created, there were some that were special. There were not only colossal and strange, with big as well as small roots but they were also rare to find. Nikob lived in these huge trees throughout and regularly studied the atmospheric temperature until it was stable enough to sustain humans and animals. He then created small animals that grew and transformed into human beings. At first, the animals could not walk, because they were too small and weak, but as time went on, they began walking on four legs like chimpanzees. One day, just as God had designed it, they began walking on two legs. That is how humans were created.

Some seed of trees fell in distant places across the great waters. In those places, the atmospheric conditions were too hot. Nikob lived in

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the gigantic trees for long, waiting for the climatic condition to normalize before he could create the people of that land. He waited for long but the aridity was the same. So because he had work to do in other places, he decided to create them like that. Unfortunately for them their skin colour looked like fire. In fact, after some celebrated hunters, who had received different titles on so many occasions for their bravery in hunting such wild animals as lions, tigers and leopards, met face to face with one of the hot humans* in the forests, there was a general conclusion that one could get burnt by just touching them. The belief was however modified when Zintgraff, the German explorer, appeared in the land and the Chief mustered the courage and touched his supposedly hot skin only to realize that his temperature was not different from those with black skin. Even so, the Bali people have remained glued to their beliefs in the trees and today, it is a taboo and even a curse to cut down certain trees in Bali Nyonga, because it is still believed that Nikob lives in them.

* This appellation refers to the whiteman whose first appearance to the blacks was frightening as their skin was thought to be made of fire.

Analysis

Creation myths exist all over the world and in almost all world religions. The Bali creation myth adds to this array of myths in identifying a supreme deity as the creator of the earth and the different races (black and white), and goes a step further in acknowledging that humans evolved from smaller creatures millennia ago. This myth suggests a possible link between the creation myth and Darwin's theory of evolution, provided it does not precede Darwin. This helps to clarify why young people who have for long been confused as to which version to believe. From an ecological perspective, this myth helps to enforce the call for protecting environment, eco-criticism or green activism encouraging humans to review their relationship with nature and to live lightly on the earth. Finally, this myth draws from a real historical event: the coming of Zintgraff to Bali in the 19th century.

The Bali creation myth parallels many creation myths, which consider God, the supreme being as the creator of the earth and everything in

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	it. The main similarities in these myths are an echo of the common origin of man, the relationship between the creator and the created and humanity's closeness with the environment.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Humanity Nature Religious beliefs
Further Reading	Arthen, Walter Wright, "Paganism and Myths of Creation: A Ritual of Transformation", *Earth Spirit,* April 14, 2017 (accessed: August 20, 2018). Darwin, Charles, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, London: John Murray, 1859. Sproul, Barbara C., *Primal Myths: Creation Myths around the World*, San Francisco: Haper-Collins, 1991. *The Origin of Black and White (Red) Races* (accessed: November 30, 2020). *The Origin of the Human Races*. creation.com (accessed: August 20, 2018). Zintgraff, Eugen, *Nord-Kamerun. Schilderung der im Auftrage des Auswärtigen Amtes zur Erschlieszung des nördlichen Hinterlandes von Kamerun während der Jahre 1866–1892 unternommenen reisen*, Berlin: Gebrüder Paetel, 1895.

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Addenda

Researcher: Eleanor A. Dasi.

Assistant researcher: Julius Angwah.

Method of data collection: Tape recording.

Editors: Daniel A. Nkemleke and Divine Che Neba.

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