Eleanor A. Dasi, Julius Mboh Angwah, "Entry on: Myth of the Láng by Gideon Mbangmoh", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Divine Che Neba and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/610. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Gideon Mbangmoh

Myth of the Láng

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 Láng
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Pidgin
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	March 21, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bamenda
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (young adults + adults)
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Creators



Gideon Mbangmoh (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 53 (in 2018)

Social status: Notable

Profession: Plumber

Language of narration: Pidgin

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com and Julius Mboh Angwah, University of Yaounde 1, juliusangwah@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background*: Nkambe is the headquarters of the Donga-Mantung Division in the Northwest Region of Cameroon. It is the siege of the Mbum ethnic group, which is believed to have migrated from the Adamaoua plains some four hundred years ago. They are generally called the Wimbum and they speak a language known as Limbum. Kingship in this group is hereditary and upon enthronement, the king is initiated into the secret cults of the land for spiritual empowerment and divine wisdom. The Wimbum people are mostly farmers but also engage in wood, bamboo and raffia crafts works. Like most traditional African societies, they believe in a supreme being under whom are smaller gods directly connected with particular needs of the people. They also practice herbalism as a form of medicine. One of the herbs specially used by herbalists is Láng, a special thorn-like plant. The name Láng was the name of the native doctor who was transformed into the plant. Láng is not cultivated, grows in the wild and wherever it is found, it is always the same. No one has ever seen it in any other size. Every night, at exactly the time it came into existence, it hisses like a snake.

Occasion: staged

* Source: cvuc.cm (accessed: January 9, 2019).

Summary

Many years ago, after the great gods of the universe had finished the creation of the universe and assigned various magical responsibilities to different plants, Láng, one of the first native doctors in the Nkambe community, lived among the people. He, like others, explored the forests and realized that other strong native doctors had possessed the land and were controlling it through different grasses, trees and leafs, and that there were no plants under the sun which were not known by some native doctors in other communities. He then undertook a mission to create his own plant so that his powers would be unrivaled in the land and beyond.

In order to create his own plant, the spirit that he worshiped requested for a human sacrifice. Ironically, when he got a virgin girl

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to sacrifice to the spirit, as it was the culture, the spirit requested for his own life and told him that he would be the plant he wanted to create. He was not sure whether or not to consider the proposal but spirits are spirits and indeed the spirit he worshiped had gained interest in him and had judged him worthy of being a spirit in its own right. So one night, while he sat in his shrine wondering how to sacrifice his mortality, the spirit transformed him into a plant which has grown to be known, by other native doctors, as Láng.

When Láng was discovered by other native doctors, they quickly realized that it was unlike other plants so they began exploring the various ways they could use it and what they could use it for. But they also noticed that they could not harvest its leaves without sacrifices of fowls and goats. To be able to harvest a leaf of the plant, the blood of the goat is sprinkled on the Láng and the native doctor who wishes to harvest must eat the entire goat before harvesting. While harvesting, he must state the purpose while caressing the plant with the fowl. If his intentions are evil, he would not be able to harvest from the plant, but if his intentions are pure, he would harvest just a single leaf.

Láng is today considered one of the most powerful plants in the Nkambe community and is used to stop thunder as well as control deadly masquerades in the community. The king also uses it to place an injunction in an attempt to solve community conflicts. If someone is needed urgently at the palace for a problem that concerns them, the king sends the masquerade that controls the plant to stake a bamboo with the leaf fastened on it on the person's land, where it remains until the person sees it. Once he sees it, it disappears and reappears in its hut in the palace. If the person does not honour the invitation, it would continue to hiss in his compound until he honours the invitation.

Analysis

Since the dawn of time, plants have played very important roles in the myths and oral traditions of cultures across the world. Their uses range from sources of food to medicine and to mythical associations.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions

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Concepts

Further Reading

Davis, James, *Ewe Orisha. A treatise on the role of plants in the Yoruba Religion*, available at academia.edu (accessed: January 9, 2019).

Addenda

Researcher: Eleanor A. Dasi.

Research Assistant: Julius Angwah.

Editors: Didymus Tsangue Douanla.

Method of data collection: Tape recording.

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