Eleanor A. Dasi, Julius Mboh Angwah, "Entry on: Nä'Si by Eleanor Zofoa", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/616. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Eleanor Zofoa

Nä'Si

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	Nä'Si
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	English
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	August 15, 2018
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bamenda, North West Region, Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (young adults + adults)
Author of the Entry	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com Julius Mboh Angwah, University of Yaounde 1, juliusangwah@yahoo.com
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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Eleanor Zofoa (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 25 (in 2018)

Social status: Princess

Profession: Student

Language of narration: Wang Vengo, English

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background*: Babungo is a rural community and one of the thirteen villages that make up the Ngo-Ketunjia Division of the Northwest Region of Cameroon. History holds that the people migrated from the Tikar of present day Adamaoua Region, made their first stop at a place called Forghai, before being guided by their ancestors to their present location. It has a population of approximately 4000 people, the majority of whom are subsistence farmers. It is a typical traditional setting ruled by the "Ngumba" (council of elders) with the king at its helm. Like many traditional societies of this part of the country, the Babungo people have remained glued to their aged beliefs in the Gods. There is however an art and cultural museum in the palace of Babungo, which contributes to the development of the rich diversity of cultures of the Northwest Region.

Occasion: staged

* Source: cameroontourismlink.wordpress.com (accessed: January 11, 2019).

Summary

So many years ago, there was a certain queen in Babungo called Nä'Si who liked eating sugar cane very much. In fact, it was said that she was always eating sugar cane and people could swear on their lives that they never met her not eating sugar cane. Whenever she was going to the farm she would get enough sugar cane to take her to the farm and back. While the other queens and women in the community farmed other crops like beans, corn and cocoyam, she would do same but would always add a lot of sugar cane because she loved it so much.

Unfortunately for Nä Si, she did not have a child. So she took one of her nieces to live with but did not treat her well and so she ran back to her mother's house. Shortly after her niece had left, she began feeling the absence of the child in her life. She consulted so many priests, prophets, healers, and herbalists who all confirmed that she was not barren, and that she had to wait for the Gods' appointed time for her to have her own child.

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In order to distract herself from this problem of childlessness, she would often go to Tadong, a small river in the North East of the palace, where she would sit, eat her sugar cane and sing sad songs in relation to her barrenness. After spending some time at the river side, she would go back home hoping she could get a child of her own.

One day, on her way to Tadong, she met a little boy who begged her for some sugar cane. She had eaten the sugar cane and just very little was left. She refused. The little boy continued begging but she ignored him and went on to Tadong. As she journeyed along, she kept meeting this little boy at intervals. The boy kept on begging for sugar cane but she remained adamant.

Another day, on her way to Tadong she again met this little boy. Again, he begged for some sugar cane. She felt disturbed that she could not share her sugar cane with the little boy but then, wondered why the little boy always begged her for sugar cane just when very little was left. She, however, refused and continued her journey as usual. That day, however, things were not as usual. As she sat on the stone, she heard a voice from the river that asked her why she refused to give "her"* some sugar cane. She was terrified and ran back to the palace. When she got to the palace, she met the chief priest who had been waiting for her. To her utmost shock, the chief priest asked why she badly wanted a child but was not kind to children. The chief priest told her that children come from the Gods and the Gods only give children to women who can take care of them. Nä Si begged for another chance but the chief priest told her it was too late and that she would never have a child because the Gods had given her one already and she had refused to feed him. That day, she cursed herself and vowed never to eat sugar cane again.

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* It was the goddess of fertility that transformed into the small boy to test Na'si's love for children. The voice was that of the goddess.

Analysis

The myth of Na'si illustrates the phenomenon of barrenness, or reproductive failure, and its relationship to the divine irrespective of whether the cause was natural or supernatural. Within some religious frameworks, barrenness or infertility has been regarded for centuries as punishment from God. Na'si in the above myth is guilty of

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	insincerity, selfishness, self-centeredness and lack of love towards her niece and the little boy, which cause her life-long barrenness. Na'Si's choice of the riverside as the site for consolation is associated with the general belief that water is a symbol of fertility, purification and sanctification. It is the dwelling place of most divinities and spirits, it therefore forms an intrinsic component in most spiritual beliefs. Na'Si therefore goes to the river in the hope that the gods who dwell therein may have pity on her and grant her request.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods
Further Reading	McCann, James, *Stirring the Pot: a History of African Cuisine*, London: C. Hurst, 2010.
Addenda	Researcher: Daniel A. Nkemleke Research Assistant: Julius Angwah Editor: Eleanor A. Dasi Method of data collection: Tape recording

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