Eleanor A. Dasi, Julius Mboh Angwah, "Entry on: Why the People of Ngwokong No Longer Eat Frogs by Cosmas Aza", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Divine Che Neba and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/630. Entry version as of November 05, 2026.

Cosmas Aza

Why the People of Ngwokong No Longer Eat Frogs

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	Why the People of Ngwokong No Longer Eat Frogs
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Meta
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	July 10, 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)
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Creators



Cosmas Aza (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 70 (in 2018)

Social status: Notable

Profession: Carpenter

Language of narration: Meta

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*: Ngwokong is one of the principal villages that make up the Meta tribe. The Meta people are found in Mbengwi, the Divisional Headquarters of Momo Division in the Northwest Region of Cameroon, and its surrounding villages. They belong to the Menemo clan of Bantu origin and are reportedly settled only in Cameroon. The name Mbengwi in Meta literally means “land of wild animals.” This name comes from the fact that the place was a hunting ground before the coming of the colonialists. The people believe in the ancestors as the link between humans and God.

Occasion: staged

* Source: all-about-cameroon.com (accessed: January 18, 2019).

Summary

In the olden days, there was a virtuous old woman in Ngwokong who was considered a model of communal morality. All the women in the community were often advised to emulate her character because she understood what it meant to be a woman and a mother. Even in her humility, her voice was the most eloquent when there was the need for women to assert their responsibilities and privileges in major traditional events. Everyone was convinced that her husband was blessed because many longed to have her as wife.

One day, she went to the farm and didn’t come back after all the women had returned. Her husband and children were worried, so they went about asking if anyone had seen her. After knocking all the doors in the neighborhood, a few men, including her husband, were then encouraged by the chief priest to go to the farm in search of her. The men searched everywhere but couldn’t find her. There, they saw a big frog croaking. Its noise sounded as if it was singing. Since frogs were eaten in the land, they wanted to catch this particular one for supper, but quickly remembered that frogs were harvested in the marshes and not on dry farmlands. They suspected that it could have some spiritual implications and so they carefully avoided it and returned to the community.

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To their greatest surprise when they got to the community, they could still hear the croaking of the frog, this time coming from the woman's house. So they told the chief priest about it.

The chief priest consulted the gods and was given the wisdom to understand the language of the croaking frog. After listening attentively, he then told the people that because the good old mother's time had come to join her ancestors, the ancestors, in their wisdom, transformed her into a frog, and that the croaking frog was simply saying that "I am your mother whom you cherish so much". In fact, after this revelation, the people then listened again and could then hear the frog saying just that. Since then, the people stopped eating frogs that hopped into their houses or compounds for fear that it could be their loved one who has come back to them from the land of the dead.

Analysis

The concept of reincarnation abounds in many world cultures. The belief is based on the idea that the human soul does not die but keeps coming into existence in other human or animal forms.

Reincarnation is a central tenet in African belief systems. Death, to the African, is not a termination of life but the transition from one life to another. This other life may either be human or animal. When an animal is suspected of being a reincarnated family member, it is not killed. This is the case of the woman in the myth who, because of her good deeds, was brought back to life in the form of a frog. The frog then becomes a mythic and sacred animal among the people of Ngwokong, parallel to other sacred animals in different cultures.

Frogs figure in many myths and folktales, for example, in the following African myths: *Kimanaueze*, *Nya'ti and Her Frog Lover* or *Origin of EVU (Evil Spirit) and AWU (Death) Amongst the Beti-Fang*. The frog character is not always presented in the same way. It can be a sacred animal, an animal helper or an abominable creature.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions

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Further Reading

Grimm, Brothers, *Household Stories*, London: David Bogue, 1857, 1–3. (accessed: December 28, 2020).

Grimm, Brüder, "Der Froschkönig oder der eiserne Heinrich" in *Kinder- und Haus-Märchen. Erster Theil*, Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812 (accessed: December 28, 2020).

Addenda

Researcher: Eleanor A. Dasi

Research Assistant: Julius Angwah

Editor: Divine Che Neba

Method of data collection: Tape recording

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