

Annick Ndo Medjoto

Angon Nana and Abomo Nguele

Cameroon

TAGS: [African Mythologies](#) [African Storytelling](#) [African Traditions](#) [Gods](#)



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General information	
<i>Title of the work</i>	Angon Nana and Abomo Nguele
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<i>Country/countries of popularity</i>	Cameroon
<i>Original Language</i>	Bulu
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<i>Genre</i>	Myths
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Creators



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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Background*: The Bulu culture of the Centre and South Regions of Cameroon has a rich custom of rites and mysteries. They have, for example, the rite of initiation for men, which ritual marks the temporary space from the birth of the boy to when he attains marriageable age. The Bulu believe in the myth of the movement and displacement of properties, something that is not physical but mystical as it is not the physical properties that are displaced, but the displacement takes place in the mind. Also, they are noted for their utter refusal to eat corn that locust has eaten. The locust is considered as their brother - but the corn can be consumed if transformed into wine.

Occasion: Live Performance

* Source: [La Société Traditionnelle Ewondo: Rites, Mythes, Mystères, bonneculture.com](http://bonneculture.com) (accessed: April 23, 2019).

Summary

Long ago, in a certain corner of South Cameroon, was born a boy of extraordinary handsomeness, named Angon Nana. He was so handsome that upon seeing him people were cured of their psychological problems.

Unfortunately, Nana's parents died while he was still young and he became unbearably sad. He wept day and night for several years. One day, amid his tears, he felt a strange presence around him. As he turned around, a girl Abomo was looking down at him smiling. She dried his tears. As she looked into his eyes, her gaze was spell-binding and her beauty bewitching. Angon Nana asked her who she was and what she wanted but she did not respond. He then concluded that his mother's spirit must have sent her to him and invited her to stay with him. Yet the lady did not respond. Angon kept on pleading with her to talk to him and finally she broke her silence. She said Angon had charmed her with his looks but had also saddened her with his grief. She said she was leaving but if Angon loved her, he should search and find her within two days. She asked him to follow the guidance of the ants at his mother's grave. Then she disappeared before Angon could

return to his senses.

After two days, Angon prayed to his parents' spirits for guidance, stood up and followed the ants. He walked through the forests with his head straight and his spirit envisioning his target. Soon, he got to the destination the ants were to take him to. He explored the place in the hope to see his love but he did not. He cried out her name, "Abomo", but no voice responded. In a flash, the road to the land of immortals opened up before him. The young man did not shiver as he was convinced that he was standing on the path to his glorious fate. Angon walked across plains, down valleys, up hills, and crossed rivers. At last, he came to a hut. His hope was revived as he felt he was nearing Endam-Ayad, Abomo's village. He passed the hut being certain that his beautiful queen could not live there. He barely noticed an old woman who was sitting in front of the hut and was inviting him to have some rest. The courageous man was going straight ahead when he realised that he was moving on the same spot: in front of him was the same hut and in front of the hut, the same old woman. He then went to her to ask the way to Endam-Ayad. The latter babbled something he could not understand. Again, the young man left and walked till nightfall. But still, he found himself in front of the old woman's hut. Again, he begged her to show him the way to his destination. "This is it in front of my house", she responded arrogantly. Her words were full of jealousy and her eyes were filled with love for the handsome heroic young boy. In a moment of silence, the wrinkled old woman enlivened herself with fantasies about her guest. "I know what you want", the boy said angrily, waking the old woman from her daydream. "But my heart is destined to one with an amazing beauty. Being an orphan", he continued, "I need no one but her to bring back to me what nature has taken away." As he spoke, the sincerity of his words pierced the woman's soul arousing her admiration for his purity. "Blessed is she whom your destiny leads to!" she exclaimed. Her face down, she went into her hut. Behind her, her beloved stranger. She offered him food and drink which he devoured voraciously. Before he finished eating, his host was already slumbering on her raffia nest-like bed where she invited him. It was bedtime. Angon slept soundly. In the middle of the night, his eyes started blinking as if he were dreaming. Suddenly, he woke up and peeped out. It was still dark. Ants and other insects were making noises. Owls were hooting at an almost regular interval. The young man laid down though he did not feel sleepy. Tired of lying down aimlessly in an endless dark night, he put this question to his bed mate: "old woman, where is the day? Why is the sun not rising?" The

shock he received made him spit disdainfully at the old woman. "Unless you suck the milk in my breasts and forgo your pride", she said, "the day will not rise." With this answer, Angon Nana understood his nightmare had just begun. He turned around in rejection of the indecent proposal and laid back. He slept nine times then woke up. The dark night had not gone. He sat up staring at the floor. As his mind took him to his sweetheart, he jumped onto the old woman's breasts and sucked them passionately. In the twinkle of an eye, the day rose. Then, he realised that the old woman had turned into a beautiful young lady. The latter said to him: "My milk has put wise words into your mouth. You now have enough life in you to overcome the upcoming challenges. Take this bag and go. Be triumphant."

As soon as Angon Nana bade farewell to his host, he continued his journey. Not long afterwards, he heard voices from afar. He was surprised to discover that the village looked more like a city with multiple houses having doors and windows. The inhabitants of the locality were all gathered at the village square for a party. The young man watched an animal feast during which grasshoppers, snails, and centipedes were choreographing acrobatic movements to a frenzy rhythm orchestrated by the beating of drums and a tambourine. There were other animals like gorillas, chimpanzees and deer. His presence, however, seemed to interfere with the happy mood. The music suddenly stopped and a voice addressed him in these words:

"Son of man, how did you get here? And what prompts your coming?"

"I am Angon Nana, son of Amana", he replied in songs, "the lucky suitor of AbomoNguele, daughter of NgueleMissanga who lives in the land of immortals. My beautiful fiancée's hands have I come to seek in marriage."

Once more, the same questions were put to him and he answered the same way by singing.

Angon's journey took him thereafter to a river twice as big as the Sanaga River*. He stood at its bank for a while thinking of how to cross. From the horizon, he saw a huge wave rising and coming forth at an incredible speed. Calmly, he watched it moving, later dying on the shore. At the spur of the moment, dry leaves and tiny tree branches whirled high up in a dusty and sandy atmosphere, foreshadowing a violent storm. At the background, he heard a voice asking him the same questions as previously. He gave same old response. Instantly,

the river vanished mysteriously. From there, he was led safely to Endam-Ayad by a gentle voice that made him feel so comfortable that he thought his nightmare was coming to an end.

At last, Angon Nana could breathe the air of Endam-Ayad. At last he was sensing the fruit of his perseverance and feeling closer to his dream. But then, he still had not singled out AbomoNguele's father's house. He had to rely on himself to do this since the law forbade immortals from receiving passers-by. He closed his eyes and allowed his spirit to guide him. Fortunately, he found the house successfully at the first attempt. The brave man entered the compound. Children were playing and shouting in the yard. Clouds of smoke were escaping beneath the roof of a hut and through a small window. NgueleMissanga, Abomo's father, was sitting on a long raffia armchair on the veranda. Angon Nana stood in front of him and was about to greet when the old man anticipated:

"Hello, handsome daring young man! So, you have been defying the wisdom and science of immortals! Tell me: where are you from? Where are you to? And why are you here?"

"Father", he replied, "your daughter has stolen my heart and taken it away with her. Therefore have I come to ask for her hand in marriage."

"Sit down, dear", NgueleMissanga said in a welcoming tone. The patriarch feigned to entertain his guest with a kola nut and exquisite palm wine. During their talks, he promised the young man heaven and earth. But Angon Nana had grown in wisdom. Experience had taught him to beware of unexpected kindness. Consequently, he did not drink the wine neither did he eat the kola. At night-time, he was directed into a dark room. Once there, the wise young man sensed his host had led him into a trap. He reached into the bag the old woman had given him in search of items to light up a fire. He found two flints, a tuft of dry straw, a whistle, a tiny whip with two heads and two antlers. Angon lit the fire. What he discovered was mesmerising: owls perched beneath the roof, snakes in one corner of the room, snails and scorpions in the other, human bones used for footboards and mats made of human skins. The young man courageously whipped the owls to death, slew the snakes, scorpions and snails and burnt the mats and the human bones. After cleansing the room of these harmful things, he stretched his sleeping mat and laid down. He slept soundly the whole night; a night that seemed to be as long as the one spent in the old woman's hut. In the morning, NgueleMissanga realised the ravages perpetrated

by his guest, which negatively affected his power. He therefore called Angon Nana and put these words to him:

"Angon, dauntless son of Amana who blushes in love for my daughter, let us go hiking through the forest. I wish to pick a few kola nuts since I have got none to offer you now."

Humbly, though aware of the impending danger, Angon Nana took his bag and followed his host. When they reached the kola nut tree, NgueleMissanga pretended to be looking for a special ladder with which to climb the tree. In the meantime, the fire-eating young man, who had fallen into his host's trap, fought like a lion to free himself from the monsters that guarded the kola nut tree. He succeeded in killing them all, then picked some nuts and took them to the village. The old man was infuriated at Angon's victory but could not express such feeling openly. Claiming hypocritical kindness, he invited his guest to enjoy honey picked directly from the hive. Immediately, they went round the rock under which bees had settled. Angon saw the fresh honey and remembered his childhood during which he used to be delighted eating honey. He greedily stretched his hands under the rock to help himself to some. His human nature took control of him as he forgot about his cunning father-in-law. The latter ordered the rock to close on the young man's arms. While Angon Nana was suffering with his arms wedged between the rocks, his companion was jubilant because he thought he had succeeded in overpowering an extraordinary mortal. Then he confessed the evil he had been planning against the young man and said how useless the latter was, claiming to marry an immortal.

Angon was furious but helpless. Worn out, he cried out desperately to his love, "Abomo, my love, where are you? Why have you abandoned me? Do I deserve such tragic fate?" He did not conclude his dramatic speech when the antlers came out of his bag and smashed the old man's eyes. At that time, both men were wrecked. Angon Nana invoked the spirit of his fiancée again. The bag puffed out the double-headed whip and stroke the blind man violently. The latter fell and started crying out for help. But the deer horns and the whip did not grant him any respite. They kept on hitting him as he ran through the forest. Unfortunately, the pains of the wicked old immortal did not calm those of the brave lover. He was bleeding trying to pull out his arms. The stings of bees all over his face aggravated his pain. In agony, he recurred to AbomoNguele for a third time. Then, the tuft of straw popped out of the bag and lit the fire on the rocks. They cracked open,

ultimately freeing Angon Nana. It was then that Abomo showed up to rescue her hero. She took him in her arms delicately caressing his bruises and lovingly looking straight in his eyes: "If agreed that love is a poison that kills, it should also be attributed some healing virtues", Angon concluded joyfully.

* The longest river in Cameroon.

Analysis

Considering the nature of the African cosmology, wherein the world of the living is different from that of the Gods, spirits and *Living dead* (to borrow from JS Mbiti in *African Religion and Philosophy* *), there is need for some being to serve as intermediary between the different worlds. Most of these mythic figures, who are called upon to serve as intermediaries after transcending into the world beyond, end up as prophets upon their trip back to the world of the living. They often become Chief priests, tradi-practitioners to mention a few, or rescuers of humanity in the hands of forces beyond their control at family and village levels.

The myth, in introducing this element of journeying into the world beyond, helps ascertain that even the living in African mythology, like in most world mythologies, can break the frontiers between the different worlds without necessarily dying. For example, in Greek mythology, figures like Aeneas, Tiresias, Orpheus and Odysseus all transcend earthly life to make exploits in the world beyond. Besides the above, the myth also shares elements of desertion.

John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann, 1969.

Classical, Mythological,
Traditional Motifs,
Characters, and
Concepts

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Other Motifs, Figures,
and Concepts Relevant
for Children and Youth
Culture

[Adversity](#) [Appearances](#) [Boys](#) [Girls](#) [Journeys](#) [Love](#) [Magic](#) [Orphans](#)
[Relationships](#)

Further Reading

Mbiti, John, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann, 1969.

Albinus, Lars, *The House of Hades: Studies in Ancient Greek Eschatology*, Arhus: Aarhus University Press, 2000.

Addenda

Method of data collection: Tape Recording and note-taking.

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