Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Myth of Ngipop by Esther Monstengap", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi and Hanna Paulouskaya. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1541. Entry version as of November 06, 2026.

Esther Monstengap

Myth of Ngipop

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 Ngipop
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Məngákà
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	December 24, 2021
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bagam, West Region, Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaounde 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com Hanna Paulouskaya, University of Warsaw, hannapa@al.uw.edu.pl

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Creators



Esther Monstengap (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 74 years (in 2021)

Social status: Commoner

Profession: Farmer

Language of narration: Məngákà

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaounde 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

The Bagam people are found in the Western region of Cameroon. They are either called “Bagam”, “Ghap” or “Eghap”. They migrated from the Adamawa region of Cameroon during the time of population movements in Cameroon. After a long walk from the Adamawa region, they were first sheltered by the Bamoun people of the West Region of Cameroon. Due to their fast growing population and insubordination, they were evicted by the Bamoun and they later moved to the far west of the territory. They crossed the Noun River and occupied the empty territory, which today is called Bagam. The Bagam people are ruled by a Paramount chief called “Fong,” who is assisted by a council of chiefs, the sacred society (Ngengong) and quarter heads. Over the years, the Bagam people have had a good number of rulers. However, with the demise of the last ruler, the chiefdom has been in great chaos, since the sacred society and king makers are unable to select a new chief. For over a year now (2022) the village is run by the council of chiefs, elders and the sacred society. The people have a strong belief in God, ancestors, spirits, and divinities.

The language spoken by the Bagam people is Məngákà. This language was scripted by the very first Paramount chief, Fong Pufong. This original script was very similar to that of the Bamoun people. However, given that the village is bordered by the ancient great Bali Kingdom (before its split into the seven different subgroups), the original script was greatly affected by the “Mungaka” of the Bali Nyonga people.* This explains why there is a high degree of intelligibility between the Bagam language and that of Bali Nyonga of the North West region.**

* See The Bali Creation Myth.

** Writing about the Bagam people is rare. The information obtained here resulted from interviews and an unpublished script handed to us by one of our informants, Esther Monstengap, purportedly written by the husband before his death. The script itself had no title.

Summary

A long time ago, there was a neighborhood called Ngipop, named after

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the guardian spirit of the Bagam community. People who lived there knew that thieves could not invade the vicinity because of the presence of the tutelary spirit, so they slept with their doors open. These people slept with their doors open because they believed in *Ngipop**, the guardian spirit, having the shape of a small shabby child, moves around in the night to protect the inhabitants from all enemies and wild animals.

Thieves from the village were surprised on their way home by the sudden appearance of this little shabby child with tongues of fire, who told the thief “Oh! they have burnt that house ooooo”, pointing to the thief’s house, and the house would suddenly burn into ashes.

Because of the presence of *Ngipop* in the community, no one knocks at any person’s door at night. It is believed that if one knocks at any door in the night, and the host replies “come in,” even unknowingly, s/he has invited *Ngipop* into his or her household and it will haunt them with strange noises throughout the night.

One day, it all happened that a lady visited her sister, married to an inhabitant of Ngipop. While in the night, someone knocked on the door and being ignorant of the law of the land, the lady answered “come in.” Her sister was so mad at her for responding to the knock but had nothing to do but to spend an awful night with the visitations of *Ngipop* and its cabal. The little creature invaded the house at night with its friends, and they played all night, brandishing red coal, shifting pots, and other kitchen utensils. The visiting lady and the host did not sleep, and very early in the morning, she left and promised never to visit her sister again.

No one in the village moves with fire at night for fear of *Ngipop*. It announces the death of influential personalities by appearing at dusk with tongues of fire and crying loud for the imminent loss. To date, the neighborhood is still called Ngipop, and *Ngipop* still appears from time to time to punish defaulters. *Ngipop* also acts like an oracle to its neighborhood.

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* *Ngipop* is the guardian spirit, having the shape of a small shabby child and Ngipop is a name of village in Bagam.

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Analysis	Tutelary spirit is a widespread phenomenon in African and world mythologies. This spirit, otherwise known as the guardian, is a covenant spirit. As well as it guards and protects humanity, humanity on its part is supposed to respect its commandments. *Ngipop* as shown in this myth falls within the category of tutelary spirits, as it protects the village against invaders, wild animals, and unknown spirits. The community is aware of the protector's presence which is revered by many, and transgressors often bear the consequences. Both parties are to respect the bond that links them by averting any form of contravention of the existing pact. Such spirits vary. There are community protective deities as well as household and individual protective deities. The community guardian spirit has its shrine where periodic sacrifices are offered by priests or the chief priest of the community whereas household and individual spirits are worshiped by family members and individuals respectively. As tradition is transmitted from one generation to another, so is the worship of such spirits in most, if not all African pantheons. The younger generation grows to learn the way as the path to salvation.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Religious beliefs Tradition
Further Reading	Daryll, Forded, ed, *African Worlds: Studies in Cosmological Ideas and Social Values of African People,* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1954. Keith, Ward, *Religion and Revelation in World's Religion*, Oxford:

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Addenda

Occasion: staged

Method of data collection: note taking

Researcher: Divine Che Neba

Assistant researcher: Fesieh Noela

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