Aïcha Saïd Larissa, Brindy Belinga Claude, "Entry on: The Feeding Cow by Paul Louabe", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2022). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1542. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Paul Louabe

The Feeding Cow

Chad

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	The Feeding Cow
Country of the First Edition	Chad
Country/countries of popularity	Chad
Original Language	Moundang
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Chad
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	September 15, 2021
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Ndjamena
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
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Creators



Paul Louabe (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator : 70 (in 2021)

Social status : patriarch

Profession : Farmer

Language of narration: Moundang

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Abéché, the capital of Ouaddaï Region, is located in south-eastern Chad and is surrounded by Sao and Chao. It is reported to have been the settlement of Ouaddai Muslim sultanate, before the 1912 French colonisation. Tombs of former sultans can still be visible in the region. Abéché remains a pastoral economy where farming is the chief activity. Men dominate most sectors of the society and women handle family responsibilities like housework and childcare. In addition, they maintain nuclear families that practise polygamy and respect community elders. The patrilineal system of inheritance is significant among them. Oracular practices and divination, ancestor veneration, belief in spirits and ideas of fertility are invaluable to the Abéché.

Sources:

Fuchs, Peter, "Nomadic Society, Civil War, and the State in Chad", *Nomadic Peoples* 38 (1996): 151–162.

Chad, everyculture.com (accessed: May 4, 2020).

Summary

In the distant past in the villages around Ndjamena there was a cow that was known to provide food to the people of Yatilam. The cow was just a mere messenger sent by God to feed the people. But the people by mistake considered the cow to be the real God; and consequently started adoring the cow to the detriment of the real God. This situation angered the real God, who tried several times to tell the people that He (the real God) is invisible. But the people considered it absurd to praise an invisible God, preferring, according to them, the « God » that can be seen. These people continued to praise the cow and offered the cow sacrifices, and the cow continued to provide much food to the people.

One day, the real God decided to punish the people by sending an unknown sickness to Pachingri, the person who was designed by God to take care of the cow while He (God) was accomplishing his other missions. The only condition for Pachingri to recover from the sickness was to eat the liver of the feeding cow. The people were

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therefore in a dilemma: they had to choose between the feeding cow (their living « God ») and the life of their brother, the only person that could take care of the cow. While they were thinking of a possible solution, the cow could no longer provide food because there was nobody to take care of it. The people then realized that the cow was not a real God. They decided to kill it in order to heal Pachingri, and to use the cow's meat as food. They used the cow's blood as a sacrifice to the real God, for forgiveness. It is believed that God forgave the people of Yatilam and everything was settled. Today the people of Yatilam use the cows as food and their liver is a powerful healing agent used in traditional medicine.

Analysis

People in many African societies as seen in the Cameroonian myth, were healed using traditional medicine. This knowledge was secretly transmitted by gods or ancestors to the people and transmitted from generation to generation through words of mouth. These drugs were taken from natural sources – water, leaves, bark of trees, animals.

This myth equally shows the importance of sacrifices in Cameroonian communities and African communities as a whole. When in the wrong or when wanting to make a request to a deity, sacrifices were used and these were generally animal sacrifices. Animals' blood were used as a tool to appease the gods, to obtain some favors from them and to show gratitude.

This myth further reflects the beliefs in active and living gods in Africa. These gods spoke to their people, warned them before punishing, and equally answered their requests. As seen with the "God" in the above myth who warned the people before punishing them. Thus they were present though not visible. Also not everyone was allowed to come in close contact with deities. Special people were assigned to speak with the gods — transmit requests from the people to the gods and messages from the gods to the people, care for the gods' shrine and anything concerning the gods. This is seen in the myth with Pachingri who is the only person allowed and able to take care of the cow. This myth equally shows the importance and value cows have in many African societies. They are vital for many tribes as they serve different functions. And here, we see the origin of this importance. Moving from a deity to a source of food, a tool for sacrifices, and a medicine for the people.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Religious beliefs Sacrifice
Further Reading	Ozioma, Ezekwesili-Ofili and Okaka Nwamaka Chinwe, "Herbal Medicines in African Traditional Medicine" in Philip Builders, ed., *Herbal Medicine*, London: IntechOpen, 2019, 191—214. Dessie, Tadelle and Ally Okeyo Mwai, eds., *The story of cattle in Africa: Why diversity matters,* Nairobi, Kenya: ILRI, Republic of Korea: Rural development Administration and Nairobi, Kenya: AU-IBAR, 2019.
Addenda	Occasion : Staged Performance Method of data collection : Note taking Researcher/Translator : Aïcha Saïd Larissa Editor: Daniel A. Nkemleke

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