Clyde W. Ford

Kimanaueze

United States (1999)

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Hero(es)



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General information	
Title of the work	Kimanaueze
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	Angola, the Mbundu or Ambundu people
Original Language	Unknown
First Edition Date	1999
First Edition Details	Clyde W. Ford, *The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa*. New York: Bantam Books, 1999, 227 pp.
ISBN	0553105442
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	1999 (date of publication of the book from which the story was summarised)
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
Author of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com

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Creators



Clyde W. Ford (Author)

Clyde W. Ford is African-American native of New York City. He is the author of three other books: *Where Healing Waters Meet: Touching Mind and Emotion Through the Body* (1989); *Compassionate Touch: The Body's Role in Healing and Recovery* (1993) and *We CAN All Get Along: 50 Steps You Can Take to Help End Racism* (1993). As a prominent guest speaker on American TV, he has taken part in more than 150 TV shows. He has written numerous articles in journals and newspapers. For more on Ford see here (accessed: July 3, 2018).

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Date and place of collection: Unknown. However, Clyde Ford states in the Preface to his book that "the myths in this book come from numerous sources, principally from the published transcriptions and translations of missionaries, ethnographers, and anthropologists".

Background*: Angola, the Mbundu or Ambundu people.

The Mbundu, Bantu-speaking people, live in Angola's North-West, North of the river Kwanza and their main language is Kimbundu. Their main activity is agriculture and their society is matrilineal, which is why land is inherited through it. Access to the land also requires lineage membership, and communication between the living and their ancestors. Further, the Bundu have a diviner widely called a Kimbanda, who communicates with spirits and looks into people's difficulties to determine whether they are linked to sorcery or not. Still, they celebrate the Mukanda, a passage ritual (birth, death, puberty, seasonal) done during the dry season.

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*Sources:

Mbundu (Ambundu) People: Angola`s Matriarchal Tribe that Ruled the Kingdom of Ndongo and Matamba in the Ancient Kingdom of Kongo, kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com, June 16, 2013 (accessed: May 6, 2019).

Mbundu, britannica.com (accessed: May 6, 2019).

Summary

The full text of this myth is found in: *The Hero with an African Face: Mythic Wisdom of Traditional Africa* by Clyde W. Ford, in the United States and Canada by Bantam Books, 1999, pp. 61–67). This is only a brief summary of the story. The full text of the myth and others can be read in the book cited above.

The hero, Kimanaueze tells his father he would marry no one else but the daughter of King Sun and Queen Moon. So, he writes a letter to King Sun and Queen Moon. He gives it to Hawk who declines for fear of the sun's deadly heat and hands over the letter to the stronger

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Vulture, who also declines. Kimanaueze is then approached by Frog with an offer to take the letter to Sun and Moon. To this, Kimanaueze laughs but Frog insists he has a secret way of getting to the sky without flying. Since no one else would accept to take the letter, Kimanaueze gives it to Frog. Frog knows a Well, where people from the heavens always come to fetch water in large jugs. The next day, he sneaks into one of their water vessels and is thus transported to the sky kingdom. While there, he sneaks out again at night while everyone is fast asleep and places the letter on the table. The royal couple finds it in the morning and read it. Bemused at the proposal, they keep the letter aside. So, Frog returns to earth through the same means and delivers their response to the hero, but he doubts him demanding a written reply as evidence that the letter was given. After a long time, he writes another letter demanding a reply. Frog delivers it again and this time the King and Queen reply and place it on the table. In this reply, they ask Kimanaueze to come to their kingdom in person with a wooing present. Frog delivers the letter but Kimanaueze is saddened by it because he cannot fly to the sky-kingdom. Once again Frog offers to go and bring his bride to him. As usual, he arrives at the palace and waits for nightfall. While everyone is asleep, h removes the princess's eyes making her blind. Her parents seek the help of a magician. The magician explains that her future husband has cast a spell on her and the only solution is for her to go to him on earth. Upon hearing this, Frog hurries to earth and waits for her by the wayside. When the princess appears, Frog restores her eyes and leads her to Kimanaueze. They soon get married and Frog is praised for his wit.

Analysis

The use of some animals in African myths does not reduce the myths to folktales as many readers wonder aloud. Some of these animals only serve as symbols to represent people with related character traits in the society. This helps to prevent certain conflicts or vengeance among individuals in the society, as tricksters or wicked individuals are veiled under the canopy of animals. This phenomenon runs across many myths. However, this concept of using animals as symbols does not apply in all myths. The mythic world also paves the way for humanity to interact positively or negatively with some species of animals. The Kimanaueze myth brings to the limelight the relevance of the fauna to human existence. Here, the wit of the frog serves as a leeway to providence and salvation. The frog character uses the motif of an animal helper, present in many mythologies and folktales. Other

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	issues raised in the above myth include marriage between mortals and gods and the relationship between gods and humanity.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Hero(es)
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Animals Intellect Love Relationships Religious beliefs Tricksters
Further Reading	Myth *Why the People of Ngwokong No Longer Eat Frogs* (accessed: January 21, 2021).

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