Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Origin of EVU (Evil Spirit) and AWU (Death) Amongst the Beti-Fang, Cameroon by Elisabeth Belomo", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Katarzyna Marciniak and team members in Warsaw. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/187. Entry version as of November 07, 2026.

Elisabeth Belomo

Origin of EVU (Evil Spirit) and AWU (Death) Amongst the Beti-Fang, Cameroon

Cameroon

TAGS: African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Origin of EVU (Evil Spirit) and AWU (Death) Amongst the Beti-Fang, Cameroon
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Ewondo (one of the languages of the Ekang ethnic group)
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	August 23, 2016
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	From the Beti-Fang People (also called Ekang), Yaoundé, Centre Region of Cameroon
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover (Young adults + adults)
Author of the Entry	Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1, nebankiwang@yahoo.com
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaoundé 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com Katarzyna Marciniak and team members in Warsaw, University Warsaw, kamar@al.uw.edu.pl

This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Elisabeth Belomo (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 55 (in 2016)

Social status: Ekang Women Leader

Profession: Catechist

Language of narration: Ewondo (one of the languages of the Ekang ethnic group)

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating	Background: The Beti (Ewondo) people of Cameroon are mainly located in the Central and South regions of Cameroon. A mythic legend amongst the Beti reports that the Beti came from the other side of the River Sanaga. They finally crossed the river at the end of the eighteenth century on the back of a snake called An-Medza. They fled Ousman dan Fodio, a Muslim leader from the region of Adamawa in the north of the country, who decided to Islamize all animist peoples at the time in Cameroon. The Beti are descendants of the Bantu. Occasion: Staged performance.

Summary	A long time ago, Zamba (God)*, the creator and father of humanity lived on earth among humans with a human appearance. He had a very beautiful wife (Mingon**) and a daughter. People in those days were pleased to live on earth. This pleasure was due to the fact that neither death nor hunger existed, because Zamba was always there to intervene. If a person was about to die, Zamba would revitalize him/her; he would equally go to places forbidden to men every morning in order to bring them food. People did not therefore need to work in order to eat***. Nevertheless, there were two main rules established by Zamba. First, human beings were not allowed to go to the sacred forest; and if one found himself there or came across a creature called Evu (who was believed to live in that forest), the latter was not supposed to be taken back home. Second, burials were forbidden in case a person died without the knowledge of Zamba. In total respect of these two rules, people lived happily with Zamba. It happened that Zamba had to travel for some days. After bidding goodbye to his people and his wife, he reminded them to respect his two laws in his absence. After he left, there was famine since Zamba, the bread-winner, was not there to provide for them. The villagers started hunting as a means of subsistence. Mingon was worried since there was no food for her and her daughter. In this dilemma, unlike other women, Mingon went out hunting. On her expedition, she entered the forbidden forest. Once there, she collected anything

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eatable and brought it home. She did this for several days but the hunger persisted. One day as she was in the forest, she arrived at a swamp and under a big tree she saw the carcass of an animal. She happily took it home and enjoyed it with her daughter. The next day, she went to the same place, and this time around, she found a pile of dead animals. Surprised by this discovery, she then asked:

"Who is the one killing all these animals?"

After questioning three times, she heard a voice from the tree:

"I am Evu; I am the one killing the animals."

The woman asked: "Who are you?"

Evu replied: "I am Evu. I am the one who chases all the animals that are brought to the village by Zamba every day."

Mingon asked: "Are you the hunter? And where are you? Come out let me see you."

Evu replied: "You cannot see me, I am a spirit."

The woman asked: "If you are a spirit, why are you living in this forest? Come with me to the village."

Evu accepted but the woman said:

"I don't know how to carry you to the village."

At this stage, Evu turned into a frog and asked the woman to squat and open her legs, so that he could enter into her stomach. The woman did exactly what the Evu asked and the frog entered into her stomach. She then took [the carcass of] the animals back to the village. Once in the village, she told no one about what had happened in the forbidden forest. She simply prepared food as she used to do every day and gave it to her daughter. After a while, she went to the back of the house with some food [some vegetables, as there was no carcass anymore]. She then asked Evu to come out and eat. But the frog refused [to eat vegetables]; it rather asked the woman to give it meat. Mingon said:

"I have no meat to give you, but you can eat our cattle."

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The frog started killing the cattle of Mingon. Once the creature had eaten the last one, he asked for more meat and without the woman's permission, he started eating that of the whole village. After eating all the animals, Evu started eating human beings. Once Mingon saw the disaster, she asked Evu to return to the forest but the latter refused. The situation was getting worse from day to day. The villagers then called a meeting in order to debate the sudden death of people and cattle in the village. They did not find a concrete solution to the problem. Despite the worries of the villagers, the woman did not tell them what she had done, and Evu continued killing people. She nevertheless asked Evu [again] to return to the forest and leave them alone. But the latter refused telling her:

"I am comfortable here and I will not return to the forest."

Since the woman insisted, Evu told her that he would return to the forest on one condition:

"If you allow me to eat your daughter, I will leave the village," he said. Being aware that Zamba was to be back that day, she accepted the proposal:

"Good! Then eat her and leave!"

She did that knowing that her husband (Zamba) will resurrect their daughter upon return. Satisfied by the woman's answer, Evu ate Zamba's daughter but he did not leave either Mingon's womb or the village.

Unexpectedly, two days after the daughter's death, Zamba was not back and the corpse was already in an advanced state of deterioration. The odour was unbearable. Mingon had no other choice but to bury her daughter. It is only after the burial of the daughter that Zamba appeared. After the regent had recounted the events that took place in Zamaba's absence, Zamba turned and asked his wife:

"Who was responsible for all the atrocities?"

She said she did not know. Zamba insisted, and even threatened to lay hands on her. This time around she was unable to lie to her husband. She revealed to him what she had done, then to the entire village. The revelation made Zamba very angry because from all the villagers, his wife was the last person he expected to disobey his laws.

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Nevertheless, he asked Mingon where he could find his daughter to bring her back to life, and she answered:

"I had no choice but to bury her, the odour was becoming unbearable."

Zamba asked: "But how could you do such a thing?". He was furious.

Since Zamba could not bring his daughter back to life, he departed from earth to the sky promising never to return on earth again. He thus left humanity with Evu (evil spirit) and the consequence brought Awu (Death) to the people. The woman remained on earth till the day she was eaten by Awu because humans did not have the right to end their own life.

This is thus how Evu (witchcraft or evil spirit) and Awu (death) found themselves among the human race.

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* The word 'Zamba' means 'God.'

** Her name.

*** A common element of the topos of golden age (footnote by the UW part of the team).

Analysis	Mingon among the Beti is a prototype of women who disobeyed patriarchy in order to forge their way in their respective societies.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods
Other Motifs, Figures,	Animals Death Disobedience Family Good vs evil Humanity Relationships Religious beliefs Violence

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and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Further Reading	Myth *God and His People* of Bafang people (accessed: January 21, 2021).
Addenda	Researchers: Divine Che Neba and Akamba Marcelle Rosaline (trans.). Editor: Daniel A. Nkemleke. Method of data collection: Tape recording.

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