Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: The Lake That Travelled With the Undesirable Twins by Ndi-deng ", 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/190. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Ndi-deng

The Lake That Travelled With the Undesirable Twins

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	The Lake That Travelled With the Undesirable Twins
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Awing
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	November 20, 2016
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Awing, North-West Region, 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



Ndi-deng (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 65 (in 2016)

Social status: Notable (a member of the tribal hierarchy)

Profession: Farmer

Language of narration: Awing or Mbwe'we

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

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating	Background of Awing: Oral History holds that the people of Awing came from the North-East Congo and settled in Widikum via Tadkon near Batibo and finally moved to their present site. Legend re-enforces that they originated from the Bantu roots of East Africa. They belong to the upper Ngemba tribe of Bamenda central. Awing is one of Cameroon's wonders. Her hilly undulating landscape creates a spectacular panorama. It is the major shrine where most sacrifices in the village take place. It provides ultimate tourist splendor to the inhabitants of Santa sub-division in the North-West Region and support a thriving agriculture industry. In many legendary myths, Lake Awing is the abode of the Village numerous Gods, which requires annual appeasement to guarantee fertility, peace and love in the land. Occasion: Staged performance
Summary	Long, long ago, There lived a couple That got married and Had no child. The woman was already Threatened by the family of her Husband. They were calling her An old yam, A soundless gong. The woman was also Anxious to have children. People were saying

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That the joy of motherhood

Lies in child bearing.

She struggled with the husband,

But they could not hear

Ŋyàà ŋyààŋyàà [the cry of a newborn child]

In their compound.

People said,

It is a family curse.

They washed her in all the rivers*

But they could not hear

Ŋyàà ŋyààŋyàà

In their compound,

She had already given up.

Luckily for her,

A month came when

She did not see her period [menstruation].

It became a general talk

Among women.

People said,

At last the gong has sounded.

There was joy in their house.

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Although the man was happy,

He was praying that

It should not be twins.

He hated twins.

According to him, they bring ill-luck,

Especially when they are not identical**.

So, the best thing was to avoid them.

One day,

This man was going hunting.

He told the wife that,

“If it happens that you give

Birth to twins, kill one, kill one.”

And so it happened.

She gave birth to twins.

The news spread like wild fire.

Many people paid homage

To the twins’ mother.

According to the tradition,

Two trees were

Planted for these children,

[Audience:] “Which type of tree?”

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[Storyteller:] “Nkeng.”***

There was dancing in the compound every day; people were coming and going; people were happy but the mother was always

In distress.

Only the husband’s instructions

Were recurring in her mind.

She found it difficult to

Eliminate one of the twins.

One day,

She learned that

The husband had announced his arrival.

Tension mounted in her.

She was terribly afraid.

She took one of the twins.

Hid it, in the ceiling.

The husband came back.

She narrated the story to him.

How she respected his orders

In the night.

As the husband was arranging

The seat of the children,

As he was arriving at the climax [orgasm],

Water dripped from the ceiling.

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He asked the wife,

“Where is the water from”?

The wife said:

“Maybe the roof is bad again.”

The child cried.

The man was afraid.

Went up to the ceiling.

Saw the child wrapped in a mat.

He came down fuming.

He gave it to one of the sons****

To throw it into the lake. Obeying his father,

The young man moved directly

To the lake,

Dropped the child gently into it.

As the child was dropping into the lake,

The lake divided into two parts.

Received the child gently.

The child was not hurt,

The lake carefully closed again.

That same night the lake was angry,

A voice came from the lake,

That disturbed the whole village:

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"So, you and your people think

The lake is a place where you people

Have to dispose undesirable things?

I will leave the village now,

With this boy.

There will be famine in this land.

I curse the inhabitants of this land."

Immediately after this proclamation,

It [the Lake] left with the boy.

The boy is the person who comes out

To receive the annual sacrifices offered

To the gods and ancestors every year in this village.

The traditional priest and his associates will tell you better.

This is the end of my story.

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* It is a common ritual of fertility, see: Therese Mungah Shalo Tchombe and Josephah Lo-oh, "Africa and the Middle East: Cameroon", in Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, ed., *Adolescent Psychology Around the World*, New York – London: Psychology Press, 2012, 4: "The bathing is believed to clean the womb of all forms of dirt, including any previous irresponsible sexual activities that might have contaminated the womb" (footnote by the UW part of the team).

** On the attitude to multiple births in Africa see, e.g.: John S. Mbiti, *Introduction to African Religion*: *Second Edition*, Long Grove, ILL: Waveland Press, 2015, 95: "Because these are unusual births, African peoples on the whole have given special attention to twins, triplets and other multiple births. In some places in the past, twins were considered to be a sign of misfortune, and one or both would be killed,

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	or the mother would be killed" (footnote by the UW part of the team). *** A type of tree – a peace plant in the local culture. All the footnotes are by Daniel A. Nkemleke and Divine Che Neba, unless stated otherwise. **** A son he had from another wife.
Analysis	The Awing people of the northwest regions of Cameroon are extremely superstitious. They believe in the existence of good and bad omens. Among the numerous bad signs are strange children; twins are an omen of disaster in Awing Mythology.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Child, children Desires Family Obedience Relationships Superstition Tradition
Further Reading	*Ten Famous and Infamous Omens in the Ancient World*, ancient-origins.net, March 11, 2014 (accessed: August 22, 2018). *Doppelgangers and the mythology of spirit doubles*, ancient-origins.net, July 6, 2014 (accessed: August 22, 2018). Peek, Philip M., ed., *Twins in African and Diaspora Cultures: Double Trouble, Twice Blessed*, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2011.

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Addenda

Method of data collection: Tape recording.

Researcher: Divine Che Neba.

Research Assistant: Mbangwana Nghem (trans.).

Editor: Daniel A. Nkemleke.

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