Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: The Musician and His Mythic Leaves by Foncha Wanka'a", peer-reviewed by Eleanor A. Dasi and Elizabeth Hale. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/192. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Foncha Wanka'a

The Musician and His Mythic Leaves

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 Musician and His Mythic Leaves
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	Mbeuligi (Bambili)
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	August 16, 2017
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Bambili
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	Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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Creators



Foncha Wanka'a (Storyteller)

Age of Narrator: 54 (in 2017)

Social status: Quarter Head

Profession: Butcher

Language of narration: Mbeuligi (Bambili)

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

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Cultural Background: Bambili, Cameroon

Bambili is located in Mezam Division of the North West Region of Cameroon. It is fifteen kilometers away from the regional capital, Bamenda. It habours some of the major educational institutions in Cameroon like CCAST Bambili and the University of Bamenda. In spite of the advent of modern medicine, the Bambili, people, like most peoples in Cameroon, continue to believe in herbs as alternative forms of Medicare. Besides the above, the people are strongly attached to their ancestors and the gods, especially the gods of Lake Bambili. This lake is one of the major shrines and touristic sites in Bambili.

Occasion: Life Performance

Summary

There lived a man who had many

Wives and was always directing them

On what to do.

He had to tell them when to work

And when to harvest.

He was also a musician.

One day he was about to travel to the

Next village for a musical show.

He instructed his wives and children

To harvest crops in all the farms, but for one.

At the beginning they followed their husband's advice.

Later on, as the crops in the first four farms

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Were getting finished,

Their husband was still at his concert.

The food got finished.

The first wife, who is normally the head of the family when the husband is absent, told them to harvest crops from the farm that was prohibited by their husband.

The first child of that compound that she had with her husband reminded her of what the father had instructed.

He said, "MOTHER,CAN YOU REMEMBER THAT OUR FATHER TOLD US NOT TO HARVEST FROM THAT FARM?"

(Narrator takes a long breath. Has a pinch of tobacco, inserts it into his nostrils and sneezes) Mother replied: "WHAT DO YOU WANT US TO DO? HIS JOURNEY IS OVERDUE."

(The narrator opens both hands and eyes wide) The first born, Eldest of all the children told the mother that,"I CANNOT EAT FOOD FROM the FORBIDDEN FARM"

The woman ignored the child;

Ordered the other women to harvest crops from the farm.

They did so;

And when the food was prepared,

Everybody ate

But for the eldest of the children.

Astonishingly,

Everybody or animal,

That ate the food died.

The whole compound was dry;

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Nobody.

The eldest son remained very lonely,

Had nothing to eat,

He was also wondering

How to convey the message to his father when he would return.

He had only a single finger of banana left as food.

He started crying.

As he was crying in the compound alone,

(The narrator carries his hands on his head and starts shaking it.)

Birds were passing,

He was still crying,

And still alone in the compound.

Since there was no other person around,

He indicated to the birds

That he wanted somebody to keep him company.

The partridge came.

As it landed down,

The boy said,

"How can I see my father?

To tell him what has happened

Behind him (i.e. after he left for his music show)?

How will I inform him?"

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The partridge replied,

"I will call him for you."

The boy said,

"How?"

The partridge replied,

"Kwakwakwakwa" (mimics sound of the partridge)

The boy drove the partridge away;

Started crying, (narrator places his hands again on his

Head, starts imitating the boy and comments:)

I mean real crying.

Do you know how the

Cry of a matured manis like?(Eruption of laughter among the audience).

(Narrator continues)

A cock arrived;

Saw the young man crying,

He asked,

"Why are you crying my son?"

The boy replied,

"I want somebody to call my father."

The cock said,

"I will call him."

The boy asked,

"How?"

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It made the sound:

"Kokokokokokokehkokeh" (mimic sound of the cock)

The boy drove the cock away.

A hawk came.

(Audience intervenes)

"No,

Not a hawk, but a bat."

(Narrator thanks them and continues).The boy was still crying,

It asked,

"Why are you crying my son?"The boy replied,

"I want somebody to call my father."

The bat said,"I will call him."

The boy asked,

"How?"

It said,

"I will tell your father Apini

That he should know that as he left,

Something happened "behind him."

All his wives,

ALL his children,

But for you,

ALL his animals,

And many things around

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Are dead."

The boy was happy.

But the bat behaving awkwardly by hitting

The boy's head with a stick.

He fell down and died.

The bat now went to the musical show,

Apini was standing on the other

Side of the dancing circle.

The bat moved nearer,

Told him,

"APINI, A CURSE ON YOUR FAMILY,

ALL YOUR WIVES ARE DEAD

ALL YOUR CHILDREN

ALL YOUR ANIMALS

AND THINGS AROUND ARE DEAD.

He shouted.

Rushed out of the dancing circle,

Collected some leaves,

He squeezed the water from the leaves

Into the son's nostrils.

The son came back to life.

He packed his things immediately

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They went home. When they arrived,

He asked the eldest son,

"What insects have come into my yard?"

The boy said,

"My mother and your second wife

Harvested crops from the forbidden farm.

Everybody, but for me, ate,

The food from the forbidden farm,

That is why everybody died."

The father went out,

Collected the same leaves,

Brought them

Squeezed the liquid in their nostrils;

Everybody came back to life.

The leaves opened their eyes,

And everybody came back to life.

He refused squeezing the liquid into the first wife's nostrils.

That is the end of my story.

Analysis

The issue of disobedience or breaking of covenants has been a leitmotif in most myths, introducing the notion of the down fall of man or the infiltration of evil in the world. The conclusion of these reactions and counter reactions introduces the idea that humanity is responsible for their state of being from cradle and they, as most

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	myths record, have always been disobedient or remain perpetual covenant breakers. The myth of *The musician and his mythic leave*s shows how an individual punishment for refusing to abide by certain principles weighs on the entire Bambili community, rendering them miserable in the face of death. The rich, like the poor; the king, like the serf; remain miserable in the face of death, something which could have been averted if disobedience did not set in.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Death Disobedience Family Good vs evil Life Obedience Relationships Talking animals Tradition
Further Reading	Somé, Malidoma P., *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, New York: J.P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999.
Addenda	Method of data collection: Tape recording and note-taking. Researcher: Divine Che Neba. Research Assistant (Translator): Adangfung Homefred. Editor: Eleanor A. Dasi.

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