Divine Che Neba, "Entry on: Why The God Gave The Man The Cutlass and Woman The Hoe by Mofor Nchinda", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Eleanor A. Dasi and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/452. Entry version as of November 03, 2026.

Mofor Nchinda

# Why The God Gave The Man The Cutlass and Woman The Hoe

*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* | Why The God Gave The Man The Cutlass and Woman The Hoe |
| *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* | August 22, 2017 |
| *More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database* | Awing |
| *Genre* | Myths |
| *Target Audience* | Crossover (Young adults and adults) |
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| *Peer-reviewer of the Entry* | Daniel A. Nkemleke, University of Yaounde 1, nkemlekedan@yahoo.com<br>Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaounde 1, wandasi5@yahoo.com<br>Susan Deacy, University of Roehampton, s.deacy@roehampton.ac.uk |



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## Creators



**Mofor Nchinda (Storyteller)**

Age of Narrator: 60/65 (in 2017)

Social status: Notable

Profession: Farming

Language of narration: Ngemba/Awing

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



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## Additional information

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| Origin/Cultural Background/Dating | Background*: The history of the Ngemba villages of the North West region of Cameroon, of which Awing is part, is very complex due to the pattern of population movement they adopted. Like most Ngemba people, the origin of the Awing people can be traced back to North East Congo. Because of continuous frictions among different groups that settled there, the Awing people continued their journey and moved into Widikum, where they settled for some time before migrating to their present site in upper Ngemba, Santa Sub Division in the North West Region of Cameroon. Oral tradition records that families settled permanently in areas where they had some interest. That was the case of the Awing People. Some of the things that attracted them to remain permanently in this location include: the green undulating landscape and the fertile soil. Further, the settlement of the Lake Awing in the locality after separating from Lake Bambili, as the peoples' myth hold, gave them a permanent shrine, where they could perform sacrifices to their Gods and ancestors. The lake is seen today as the habitat of the Gods, spirits, and ancestors of the Awing people. These assurances were enough to implant the Awing people where there are till date. Thus, villages like Awing, Pinyin Akum, Alatening and Chomba ascribe to the Ngemba affinity because of their common migration from Widikum, and for the fact that they share a common economic, social, cultural, linguistic and political life style.<br><br>Occasion: Staged<br><br>* Source: all-about-cameroon.com (accessed: April 23, 2018). |
| Summary | In the beginning,<br><br>God created this world.<br><br>Immediately after creation,<br><br>He thought everything was over.<br><br>So he left and went up to live in the sky. |



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He stayed there, stayed there

Until his absence was noticed on earth.

Chaos started.

Nothing was going on well;

People were quarrelling;

People were fighting;

Adultery was everywhere;

Idleness was everywhere;

There was total confusion.

People wanted to know how they originated.

They started complaining;

Cursing themselves and the creator.

God heard their worries; God heard their complaints;

Sent them two companions –

The cutlass for men,

And the hoe for women.

These two things taught man to live well.

They occupied man;

Man was no more hungry.

Man started using the cutlass and the hoe

From sunrise to sunset.

He became happy.

There was no more quarrelling;



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They had little time for each other;

They only met on market days and the village holidays.

They lived peacefully.

The hoe occupied the woman.

The cutlass occupied the man.

The woman glorified her hoe

And the man his cutlass.

Their spare time was to cook, eat and sleep.

From then, the people were amazed at their creator,

Worshipping him became the order of the day:

The village, households and individuals.

That is why we have many shrines in this village,

With each and every one trying to be at peace with his creator,

So that he should not come and take back his cutlass and hoe.

This is the end of my story.

Analysis

Creation myths are universal and are as old as humanity because through the ages and in every society humans always sought to understand their origins. Because the origin of humanity is still unknown, creation myths continue to hold sway among different audiences all over the world. People hold onto myths that are close to their belief system and cultural realities. This myth, besides demonstrating that men are attached to the machete and women glued to the hoe, introduces the idea of gender segregation, which is also ingrained in most ancient traditions.

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions Gods



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| Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts | |
| Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture | Gender, female Gender, male Humanity Religious beliefs Values |
| Further Reading | Diop, Ismahan Soukenya, *African Mythology, Femininity, and Maternity,* Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. |
| Addenda | Researcher: Divine Che Neba.<br>Assistant researcher: Ngem Mbangwana.<br>Method of data collection: Tape-recording.<br>Editors: Daniel A. Nkemleke and Eleanor A. Dasi. |



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