Eleanor A. Dasi, "Entry on: The Myth of Ellah The Sacred Rock by Jean Njome Epole", peer-reviewed by Daniel A. Nkemleke, Emmanuel Ambe Ndonwi, Elizabeth Hale and Karolina Anna Kulpa. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/910. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Jean Njome Epole

The Myth of Ellah The Sacred Rock

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 Myth of Ellah The Sacred Rock
Country of the First Edition	Cameroon
Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
Original Language	mka'a (Bakaka)
Country of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Cameroon
Full Date of the Recording of the Story for the Databasey	April 25, 2019
More Details of the Recording of the Story for the Database	Nkongnine
Genre	Myths
Target Audience	Crossover
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Creators



Jean Njome Epole (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 74 (in 2019)

Social status: common man

Profession: Farmer

Language of narration: mka'a (Bakaka)

Bio prepared by Eleanor A. Dasi, University of Yaoundé, wandasi5@yahoo.com

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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating

Cultural Background*: The Mkaa or Bakaka speaking population of the Littoral Region of Cameroon, occupy the Mungo Division, named after the River Mungo. They share the cultural practice of the Wouri people (also a riverine people). Their main music is makossa, generally sung in Douala and their main dances are essèwè and bolobo. The Mka'a people's attires are saja and kaba, the Sawa people's regalia. Like other Sawa people, the Mka'a celebrate the Ngondo cultural festival, which brings all the coastal peoples together for initiations, ancestral worships of the spirits of the River Wouri (Mengu or Jengu), for protection, wrestling skills and beauty.

Occasion: Staged

* Source: interview with the narrator.

Summary

A long time ago, there existed a sacred rock called "Ellah" in a village known as Nkonjnine, situated in the Mungo sub division. This sacred rock served as a shield against all invasions in the village. Whenever there was any danger, custodians of the rock would mobilize the population to take refuge in the rock. In such circumstances, the rock opened up for the villagers to enter and later closed after everybody was in. The rock could expand to contain more people as the need arises. From inside, the outside could be seen but the inside could not be seen from outside.

Meanwhile, there was a law that prohibited any villager from blackmailing a fellow villager. In case of such violation, the rock will lose its protective power. One day, a man named Epagma blackmailed his brother's wife under pretext that she was a source of ill-omen to the village. This was simply because she was not from that village. She came from a neighboring village to marry his brother. When the custodians of tradition heard of the blackmail, they felt disappointed and ostracized Epagma, who went and started the Mbo clan, which was constantly being molested by invaders. But then, the damage had been done and the custodians of the secret of the rock were ripped of their power to hand down the secrets. As time went by, the custodians

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of the secret of the rock died one after the other without handing down the secret to anyone. That is how the people lost the protection from the rock. The rock is still standing in its position today but it has become a touristic site and is no longer a protective cave for the Bakaka people.

Analysis

There are many myths around the world featuring stones, rocks and caves. These places are usually abodes of gods, and also serve as sanctuary to people of the community.

However, such mythical places in order to exhibit their mythical value require observing certain restrictions and rules. They often demand virtues like truth, honesty, sincerity etc. when these virtues are replaced with vice, the sanctuary is automatically defiled and desecrated. This is what happened with the Ellah, which lost its protective power because someone was blackmailed.

The myth therefore accentuates the need to practice and uphold the above virtues and obey laws, as a condition for humans to continue benefiting from divine and supernatural protection.

The motif of a cave shelter in the rocks, large enough to contain an entire population is also present in the myth entitled *The Origin of "Efiehnstemseh," the Great Cave of Drums in Kedjom* (accessed: January 4, 2021).

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

African Mythologies African Storytelling African Traditions

Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture

Nature Obedience Religious beliefs

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Further Reading	*The Origin of "Efiehnstemseh," the Great Cave of Drums in Kedjom* (accessed: January 4, 2021).
Addenda	Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking Researcher: Eleanor A. Dasi Assistant researcher/Translator: Bekono Nama Julienne Susie

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