

Desire Meha

Foose and Mbumbi

Cameroon

TAGS: [African Mythologies](#) [African Storytelling](#) [African Traditions](#) [Gods](#)



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General information	
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Country/countries of popularity	Cameroon
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Creators



Desire Meha (Storyteller)

Age of narrator: 53 (in 2017)

Social status: Commoner

Profession: Farmer

Language of narration: not available

Bio prepared by Divine Che Neba, University of Yaoundé 1,
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Additional information

Origin/Cultural Background/Dating Background: Bamendjinda is a village located between Latitude 5° 36' 16.0776" North and Longitude 10° 18' 25.2072" East, in Mbouda, a division in the West region of Cameroon. It was created around the late eighteen century by Fo'o Mbougong Mba'adoh, its first ruler. The name Bamendjinda means crafty people. The Bamendjida people earn their living on small scale farming. Although farming occupies the people immensely, they cling to their cultural heritage of medicinal and herbal practices. They do not fail to visit traditional priest, diviners, prophets, herbalists, when they are in difficulties or unhealthy. These specialists descend into sacred places where they are guided by their ancestors to choose specific plants for particular diseases (see [here](#), accessed: November 19, 2018).

Occasion: staged

Summary Long ago in the village of Bamendjinda, there existed only one god, Mbumbi. He looked after the village and everything the people undertook to do was successful. No one died before old age. Then came a time when children could no longer reach twenty before dying. These sudden deaths came as a result of drought, plagues, illness and wars that hit the land. The fertile soils suddenly became very arid, barren and unproductive, and famine hit the land as a result of that. Everyone became so worried, and there was a lot of misery in the land. The people, through their chief priests and seers, called on Mbumbi to come to their rescue but amidst their helplessness, hopelessness, and despair Mbumbi was not reacting to the people's supplication.

One evening, rain began to fall and because it had not fallen for a very long time, the people thought it was the end of their plight. This happiness in the entire land however turned out to be short-lived. This is because it continued to rain heavily for over a week, accompanied by thunder, lightning and a storm. The situation became worst when the people continuously got the voice of a crying baby coming with the winds. Everyone believed it is the end of every living creature on earth. Some brave men in the land decided to follow the voice of the crying baby to know where it was emanating from. To their greatest surprise, they discovered that it was coming from the farm of the

king's last wife, Mangu. When they got to the farm, they saw a baby boy with a snake wrapped around his stomach while the baby kept crying. They immediately sent some men to go to the kingdom and fetch the king and his wives. When the baby saw the king's wife, it stopped crying abruptly, started laughing, and the sun immediately shone. The child unwrapped the snake from its body and the snake transformed into a stick which he pointed in the direction of the chief who, together with the people, went down on his knees. The child then spoke with an adult's voice:

"I am Foose, the elder brother of Mbumbi. This thief, due to his desire to monopolize power, locked me up in an underground prison but because what will be will definitely be, when this woman (*pointing at the King's last wife*) was cultivating, she dug a hole on the prison roof and I came out. I immediately captured Mbumbi and locked him up in the same prison. I am now your supreme god, the only god you have to adore."

Foose, as a way to express his gratitude to the last wife of the king, gave her part of his power and made her his wife. He then obliged all the villagers to sacrifice a person per family every year to the god. The population of Bamendjinda was decreasing drastically year after year and many were dying trying to escape from the village.

Mangu, the wife of Foose, was tired of all this massacre and hardship that went on in the land since Foose became the god of the land. In her quest to liberate the entire land from this bondage, she took her hoe and went to the farm. She cultivated without resting for one thousand days and nights before she finally burst the roof of the gods' prison and liberated Mbumbi. Immediately when she saw him, she fainted and died of fatigue. Mbumbi tried unsuccessfully to revive her. After a lot of fruitless effort, he kept her aside and rushed to Foose with whom he wrestled for another one thousand days and nights before he defeated Foose. He seized Foose's powers and imprisoned him again. He used the combined powers to bring Mangu back to life. They abandoned the farm and since then no one has ever ventured to till the farm for fear of liberating Foose again. The area, till date, is a sacred bush called Molio. Mbumbi and Mangu combined their forces and created a stream not far from the forest to mark the end of the battle with Foose. This stream is called Mezuime, meaning rebirth. Everything became normal again and since then the people started worshiping two gods (Mbumbi and Mangu).

Analysis

Polytheism is a practice in most world religions. The African pantheon is filled with a multiplicity of gods and multiform spirits. The above myth explains the concept of conflict between deities and the origin of female cult amongst the Bamendjinda people of Mbouda, West Region of Cameroon. Besides that, the myth introduces to the reader the duel over who is who in the cosmic order of the Bamendjinda people, and reaffirms the idea that no matter the elasticity of one's doings, good triumphs over evil.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts

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Further Reading

Mbiti, J. S., *African Religion and Philosophy*, London: Heinemann, 1969.

Addenda

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Method of data collection: Tape recording and note taking.
