

The baoule tribe of west africa



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Queen Awura (Aura) Pokou governed one branch of the Akan's mighty Ashanti kingdom, which traveled towards the southeast region of the Ivory Coast during the earlier part of the 18 century (qtd. in Laufer 42). Brought about by a conflict of leadership, wherein she turned down efforts to unite with the Ashanti confederacy in the present day Ghana, Pokou directed her tribe south towards the Komoe River banks. Once she asked the priest regarding the dangerous river crossing the tribe were about to embark on, the priest told her that if she offered a sacrifice, her group can successfully cross the river.

Pokou then offered her son to be sacrificed, crying out the words " Baouli--- the child is dead" (qtd. in Laufer 42). From then on, Pokou's descendants came to be known as the Baoules (Baule or Baol). The group successfully crossed the river and ended the savanna that rests on the opposite side. It was the start of a tribe which inhabited the central region situated between the Bandama and Komoe rivers. Ultimately, the Baoules absorbed many of the preexisting tribes of the region. As a result, they grew to be the most powerful and largest tribe of the Ivory Coast.

Even if the Baoules lost a great deal of their political influence in the 19th century, they are still the largest tribe of the Ivory Coast to date (Steiner 90; Uwechue 66). The tribe moved westward from Ghana at the time the Asante assumed power some three hundred years ago. The story of how they escaped from such rule lives on in oral traditions. Pokou's male descendant did not leave the place she founded. He is regarded as the nominal king of the Baoule tribe (University of Iowa). The tribe is one of the ethnic groups of West Africa. The Baoules speak Twa (Yakan 227).

Their language is a branch of the Kwa. The Kwa is a branch of the Niger-Congofamilyof African languages. Being an Akan group, the Baoules have tribal affiliations with several groups past the Ivory Coast, particularly the Akan group of Ghana. The Senufo, Guro, Gan, Dida, Ari, Anyi, and Abbe (Abe) tribes are among the Baoules' neighbors (Yakan 227). Fishing, animal husbandry, and agriculture serve as their principal economic activities (Yakan 227). A chief as well as a council of elders govern every village. Such rulers represent different lineages.

Matrilineal lineages are observed in the Baouleculture(Lovejoy 175). A chief or king heads the Baoule tribe's highly centralized system of government. The position of the chief of king is inherited (Colin 105). Several sub-chiefs manage the local inhabitants under the jurisdiction of the king. All of the chiefs greatly depend on their political advisors assisting them in the decision making process. As a principal mask association, the Goli group is responsible for the social order among the tribe (University of Iowa). Baoule art is presented in different mediums.

Among them is figure and mask carving which is heavily influenced by the tribe's Guro and Senufo neighbors. Other forms of media are wooden sculpture as well as brass and gold casting, resembling the tribes Asante heritage (Steiner 90). Similar to their fellow Africans, the Baoule tribe is famous for their wooden sculptures celebrating their conventional beliefs (Yakan 228). By tradition, the Baoules believe in a world of spirits. Likewise, they believe in the ancestor cult (Yakan 228). The hierarchy of nature gods and worship of their ancestors are incorporated in the religion they practice.

Images of spirit spouses as well as nature spirits are normally sculpted. They regard Alouroua as their creator. However, their creator god is in no way physically represented ever since (University of Iowa). Works Cited “ Baule Information. ” 3 November 1998. University of Iowa. 7 March 2009 . Colin Legum. “ Tribal Survival in the Modern African Political System. ” *The Passing of Tribal Man in Africa*. Ed. Peter C. W. Gutkind. Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1970, 102-112.

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