

Differences in the myths of the toad, the snake, and the medicine

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The Limba people of Africa live in different villages, and each village puts its own spin on the myths that are passed down from generation to generation. One of these myths focuses on the god Kanu making medicine to immortalize the Limba, and the destruction of that medicine by the toad. There are three versions of the myth of the destruction of the medicine, but they vary in several ways. The first myth, “ The Toad Did Not Love Us,” suggests that the toad dropped the medicine Kanu gave him on purpose.

Although most Biblical tales paint the snake as a dangerous creature, in this myth the snake loved the people. This myth implies that Kanu finds it strange that the people kill the snake, but not the toad, considering that the snake loved them. This myth is also different because it mentions the “ white people,” so the reader can be fairly sure that this myth was either thought up after European colonization, or it was modified to add them. The second myth, “ The Toad and the Snake,” tells that Kanu wanted to save both animals and people.

Again, the toad insisted on carrying the human portion, and again he spilled it, but not out of ill will. The snake carried his portion, and arrived with it safely. While this myth is still about why the people die, it also points out that snakes live forever because of their medicine. Perhaps this idea came from seeing molted snake skins. The skin might come off, but the snake lived forever. The last myth, “ The Toad and Death,” is a short version of the same myth, but it only concentrates on how the snake and toad feel about each other.

They are enemies because they perpetually argue about who should have carried the medicine. This is not because one loved the people more than the other. It is simply a rivalry that goes on for eternity. This myth serves more as an explanation of why snakes and toads do not get along rather than why people die. These three short myths show how stories change as they are passed around and told by different people with different influences. It is intriguing to see how one tribe could have such varied views on the same tale.