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W. H. Barker

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the festival, and whatever remains is given to the village priest. The village is twelve miles from any railway or police station, and, on enquiry, it was found that the festival was unknown to the authorities at Rome."

HUBERT A. FREEMAN, F.S.A.

NYANKOPON AND ANANSE IN GOLD COAST FOLKLORE.

Who is Nyankopon? Who is Ananse? What is the connexion, if any, between Nyankopon and Ananse?—these are questions for which no satisfactory solution has yet been found. According to Ellis (*Tshi-speaking Peoples of the Gold Coast*, p. 24) Nyankopon "was the god of the Christians, borrowed from them and adopted under a new designation." Mr. A. S. Rattray (*Ashanti Proverbs*, pp. 17-24) expresses what is obviously the more correct view that Nyankopon or Onyámé is one of the native gods.¹ Furthermore the Supreme Being has various sobriquets, *Onyámé panyin*, *Ananse Kokurokô*, and these expressions are related to the Ananse (or spider) of the Ananse tales. Is then Mr. Spider, as Sir H. H. Johnston has said, merely "the emblem of more or less successful cunning and unscrupulous rapacity . . . the emblem of wicked cunning?" Or is Mr. Rattray correct when he suggests these stories probably had a religious or totemic origin?

The following extracts from a letter by a West Indian scholar who has lived many years among the natives, give the generally accepted native opinion of to-day. "Ananse and Nyankopon are distinct; the latter is a spirit—the Great Spirit or Friend—Ananse is purely a being of imagination supposed to be most cunning, and in fact possessing all the powers, wisdom, etc. of a god. One informant, however, said that Ananse was related to Nyankopon, another says that one of the principal founders of the tribe (*i.e.* the Tshi nation) was called Ananse and was a man." This latter statement agrees with what Bosman wrote: "The negroes call this spider Ananse and believe that the first men were made by this creature."

¹ See also *Folk-lore*, vol. xxviii., pp. 108-110.

If in the following story one may assume that Nyankopon is indicated by Odumakuma, as is probable because of his command over the blacksmith,¹ then it has a direct bearing on this belief.

In the beginning Odumakuma sent his blacksmith Mbusoo to make two dozen men and two dozen beasts. Finding that the making of men required much more labour than the making of beasts, he made one dozen men and three dozen beasts, and even then was much longer than Odumakuma expected.

Tired of waiting, Odumakuma sent his chief messenger Ifu² to see why he delayed so long. Ifu started, but coming upon his friends playing Odansam³ at Akurrikerew⁴ and being a jolly young fellow, he neither went to Mbusoo to deliver his message nor returned to Odumakuma.

Odumakuma having long expected the return of either Mbusoo or Ifu in vain, went himself to investigate matters. On his way he overtook Ifu at Akurrikerew playing the Odansam. "Anafukurantwi,"⁵ called Odumakuma. "Yadom,"⁶ answered Ifu. "How is it that I overtake you here? Did I not send you to Mbusoo?" For shame Ifu could make no reply, but begged his lord to pardon him and that his name might not be forgotten. Odumakuma granted his petitions and went on his way to the blacksmith. Mbusoo received him gladly and brought all his work for inspection. Odumakuma examined all carefully, and finding only a dozen men inquired if that were all. "That is all, my lord," answered Mbusoo. Odumakuma then seated himself, and Mbusoo presented each of the lifeless creatures to him for completion. Odumakuma took a green leaf in his right hand, and rubbing it between his palms dropped the sap on the eyes of the dozen men and breathed on their faces. Immediately all rose up and then seated themselves. Then turning to the left he plucked a leaf with his left hand, and dropped the sap on the eyes of the three dozen beasts. Instantly they rose up and began to run away to the bush.

¹ Ashanti proverb: No one instructs the son of a smith how to forge, it is Onyámé taught him. See *Ashanti Proverbs*, p. 24.

² Ifu = black monkey.

³ Odansam = war dance.

⁴ A village.

⁵ Anafukurantwi = another name for black monkey.

⁶ Yadom = my lord.

Seeing that they were running away Mbusoo begged his lord to change some of them into men because there were more of them than of men. Odumakuma told him to catch as many as he could. He did so and brought them to Odumakuma, who squeezed on their eyes the sap of the leaf plucked with his right hand. Then those beasts became men and mixed with the men on the right.

Afterwards they scattered and formed nations, and in them Ifu's name is remembered, as Abrofu,¹ Asantifu,² Ehifu.³

On the general question of Nyankopon and Ananse, the following stories are given exactly as narrated by the natives :

*Anansem or Anyankösem from the Akwapim District.*⁴

Formerly Ananse stories were known as Anyankösem.

Ananse and Ananse kokuroko⁵ argued one day about a grain of corn. Ananse said he could buy a whole town and its population with a single grain of corn.

"Impossible," said Ananse kokuroko; "if you are able, I will give you my Anyankösem."

Ananse took the corn and went from town to town. When he saw some fowls he threw them the corn which was picked up by a cock. Ananse caught the cock and began to weep. The owner came, and Ananse said, "This corn was given me by the Creator to sow, and from this all men on the surface of the earth shall live. As I was holding it, it dropped and the cock swallowed it, therefore go and excuse yourself before the Creator."

The owner, in fear, gave Ananse the cock.

He went to another town, where he allowed the cock to be trampled on and killed by some oxen. He seized one of them, and in the same manner as before, it passed into his possession.

Ananse went on to the next village, where he met a funeral procession. He coaxed the people and obtained the dead body in exchange for the ox.

After dark, he entered the next town with the dead body

¹ Europeans.

² Ashantees.

³ Africans.

⁴ *i.e.* Ananse stories or Anansekokuroko stories.

⁵ Kokuroko = wonderful, mighty.

and went into a house. He was provided with food, and his 'man' put to sleep with some boys who beat him soundly. When Ananse saw what had been done he wept very much, and said to his host :

"Three years ago, I was sent by Ananse kokuroko to fetch this man, for the world about to be created is to be put on him. You and the king of the town had better go to Ananse."

Not a soul was left in the town, all arose and followed Ananse, who sang :

"Mede brofiña m'agye akoko
Mede akoko m'agye nantwi ;
Mede nantwi m'agye efunu
Mede efunu agye küro-man." ¹

The company appear before the Creator, who with his councillors is astonished at Ananse's success, and he announces that in future Anyankösēm shall be called Anansesem.

II

Spider's Tales from the Akwapim District.

In olden times "spider's tales" were called "God's tales."

One day the spider went to God and begged him to let God's tales be called spider's tales. This was agreed to, providing Ananse brought three things : an earthen vessel full of bees, a tiger and a large snake.

That very day the spider took an earthen pot to a place where he knew the bees passed. After a few minutes he saw the bees coming and began a conversation with himself.

"These bees will not fill this pot."

"They will fill the pot."

"They will *not* fill the pot ;" and so on.

The bees asked what was the matter with him.

"Yesterday, God said you bees would not fill this pot, and I said you would, so I beg you will all go in and let me see, and I will pay you for it."

¹ I have won a cock with one grain,
An ox for a cock,
My ox wins me a dead body,
My corpse brings me a town's population.

At once all went into the vessel, and the spider shut it and sent it to God.

On the next day he took a long stick and went to a place where he knew a large snake lived. He began by saying these words to himself :

" He is as long as this stick."

" He is not as long as this stick."

He repeated these words several times till the snake came out and asked him what he wanted.

" There has been an argument," said the spider, " in God's town since yesterday that you are not as long as this stick. I said you were, so I pray you will let me measure you. The snake obeyed, and the spider tied and bound him from head to tail and sent him straight to God.

On the next day the spider bought some needles and thread and sewed up his eyes and mouth. He now went to a tiger's path, singing and shouting. Suddenly the tiger came and asked him what he wanted. The spider said : " Don't you see my eyes and mouth ? I have never seen anything so fine as this since I was born, and it is good to tell your friend when you get new things, therefore come and try."

The tiger sat down and allowed the spider to sew up his eyes and mouth. He was then quickly carried to God.

That is how we get spider's tales.

III.

A Fanti Tale.

Once upon a time father Kweku Ananse met Ananse Panyin and asked him whether slander was to be preferred to bodily wounds. Ananse Panyin thought a moment and said that bodily wounds were much more grievous than slander. Kweku Ananse contradicted him ; they argued and argued, but neither could convince the other. To settle the dispute, Kweku Ananse suggested that he should come to Ananse Panyin's house the next day with a sharpened cutlass and he would allow himself

to be cut in several parts of the body. After this Kweku Ananse would spread a report against Ananse, and then they would be able to decide which was the more painful. Ananse consented to the proposal and they departed.

Early next morning Kweku Ananse presented himself before Ananse, who made many deep cuts in Kweku's body. He returned home with blood all over his body. His wife, seeing that, asked him how he came to be in such a sad state.

Kweku Ananse, feeling rather proud of his courage, related to his wife the affair between himself and Ananse. He asked his wife to tend his wounds, and after his recovery she would see what would happen to Ananse. His wife therefore did her best, and in the course of a month or two Kweku Ananse was well again.

Just about that time Ananse was about to go to a certain place to marry the beautiful daughter of a king. When Kweku Ananse was well he went to Ananse Panyin to show himself and how he had recovered from bodily wounds.

It was now Kweku's turn to prove the grief of slander. A week later, Ananse Panyin went with his retinue to the lady's place, where the marriage was to be celebrated. Time went slowly on and at last the appointed day came. On the same day Kweku Ananse too came to the place, and during the night he went to the kitchen of Ananse's mother-in-law and polluted it. He hired a rat to make a hole in the ground, and when the people assembled and began to ask questions of the room, the rat replied that the bridegroom was the cause of the pollution.

On the day following the marriage, a girl was sent to sweep the kitchen and make the necessary arrangements for cooking. She was shocked and horrified, and exclaimed, "Who has done this?" "It was the bridegroom," answered the rat from under the ground. The girl, not heeding what was said by the rat, began to shout at the top of her voice. Her alarm brought a crowd of people to the place, among whom was Kweku Ananse, who all the time was keeping watch near the place.

When he arrived he said: "I will find out who has done this." He then called aloud for the name of the culprit three

times, and each time the answer was heard: "The bridegroom has done this."

The people then began to jeer and point the finger at the bridegroom, until he was so ashamed that he left the town with his wife and came to his native land. But Ananse had been in the place before him and had spread the report all over the town. The people jeered at him, and so did his servants in spite of the thrashing he gave them, and he lost much of the respect that used to be given him. In society and in the streets people ridiculed and looked down upon him. Thus he remained until the day of his death, at which time Ananse declared that it was he and not Ananse Panyin who had done the mischief. He explained why he did it, and when he had finished his tale he jumped to the ground and made for the ceiling of his house, and there he has remained to the present day.

W. H. BARKER.