



Mbando

m a g a z i n e

Mbando Ya HVAKO Cultural Festival 2nd Edition





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WELCOME ADDRESS

Foreword

Welcome to the second edition of Mbando Magazine, a vibrant celebration of Fako's rich cultural tapestry, historical depth, and enduring legacy. Rooted in the traditions of the Bakweris, Isubus, Woveas, Mongos, Balongs, and Womboko people and set against the majestic backdrop of Mount Cameroon, this publication captures the essence of a land that blends history, nature, and community into a powerful narrative.

In these pages, you'll journey through the heart of Fako Division, a region where ancestral wisdom meets modern innovation, a division where stories are still told around the fireside at twilight. This edition explores the revival of the Mbando Festival, an iconic celebration that intertwines sacred rituals, cultural pride, and a call for unity. It highlights the evolving traditions of Fako's clans, the artistry of its people, and the resilience of a community determined to preserve its heritage while embracing the future.

Our contributors, including cultural custodians, historians, and artists, bring to life the stories that define our identity. From the captivating Malley Dance to the rhythms of Indigenous storytelling and the sacred legacy of Mount Fako, every article is a tribute to the spirit of Fako. This edition also underscores our shared responsibility to safeguard our traditions through projects like the Fako Multipurpose Cultural Center—a hub for preserving and celebrating our collective heritage.

As you turn these pages, we invite you to reflect on the importance of culture as a cornerstone of identity and a bridge to the future; he who abandons his culture becomes a slave to another man's culture. Let this magazine inspire you to celebrate, support, and engage with the vibrant traditions of Fako.

Thank you for joining us on this cultural journey. Together, let us honor our past, embrace our present, and shape a future rich in pride, unity, and resilience.

Chief Robert Esuka Endeley, P.hD.
Editor-in-Chief, Mbando Magazine

The Story Of Mbando Festival

A Cultural Journey

The Heartbeat of MBANDO: A Festival Through Time

The MBANDO is the original, sacred ritual of the Fako people. Growing up, we all knew that the it echoed throughout every village in Fako. In each village, there was a secret end to the kot'a mbowa, guarded by an ancient tree, respected and revered by the locals. It was so sacred that even a ball that strayed into the area required the intervention of the elders to retrieve it!! This tradition fostered trust, honesty, respect, and decorum—virtues that ensured peace within the community. Crimes and wrongdoings were swiftly punished, keeping the balance in check.

But there was also the lively side of the MBANDO—the annual festi-

vals. These were an exciting showcase of the Fako people's rich cultural heritage, including vibrant parades of beautiful women, wrestling, welongi, gastronomy, tug-of-war, and the captivating malay, malowa, and nganya, topped off with elaborate cleansing rituals.

I had the privilege of participating in the combined MBANDO event of March 1990, held at the Buea Municipal Stadium, before the rise of multi-party politics which began to divide communities. This event, which had political undertones, was organized under the distinguished leadership of Chief Ephraim Inoni, then Assistant Secretary General at the Presidency.

Today, the rebirth of the MBANDO YA HVAKO brings mixed feelings. The custodians of our culture, our

revered Szango Ja Mbowa, have indicated that due to encroaching modernity and rapid urbanization, the sacred aspects of the MBANDO may be somewhat suppressed, while its socio-cultural elements are brought to the fore. Thus, this new MBANDO is more inclusive and visible, conducted with care and moderation. As history is never static, the MBANDO, too, has evolved with the times, but we must preserve our traditions. This is why we must unite to fly the Fako flag higher. Unity, even amidst our little diversities, is our strength—MOLATAKO is the answer for all people of the same ancestry!

Mola Njie Kale
Chairman of the Fako Multi-Purpose Center Trust Fund Committee (TFC)



INTRODUCING THE NEW FACES OF MBANDO YA HVAKO 2024

Knight Max Lyonga Sako:

A Global Ambassador of Fako Culture

Knight Max Lyonga Sako, born in 1968 in Buea, is a globally acclaimed graphic artist whose works have graced prestigious art galleries worldwide, including Buckingham Palace and the Royal Museums of Sweden and Belgium. His art, which spans humanitarian themes such as the plight of children affected by HIV/AIDS and autism, also celebrates the resilience of women and the marginalized.

Rooted in the vibrant culture of Fako, Sako's pieces draw inspiration from the spiritual symbols of Mount Fako and the surrounding sea, blending traditional Fako cultural references with powerful, emotive color palettes. His work reflects a deep connection to his heritage, channeling the spirit of his native land through themes of strength, resilience, and hope.

Sako's artwork, generously donated to the Mbando Ya Hvako 2024 Cultural Festival, will be auctioned to support the Fako Multipurpose Cultural Center (FMCC). These pieces serve as both a celebration of Fako's cultural richness and an investment in its future, ensuring the preservation and promotion of its traditions for generations to come. Join us in supporting this noble cause—place your bids and take home a piece of art that embodies the soul of Fako, created by a globally renowned artist.

Insert picture of him



Manga James, aka MJ_Muana.Mboa *– A Champion of Traditional African Music*

Manga James, known by his artistic name MJ_Muana.Mboa, hails from Bota-land Village in the Wovia Clan of Limbe. A passionate singer and songwriter, MJ_Muana.Mboa is dedicated to the preservation and promotion of his rich cultural heritage through music. With a strong foundation in Afro-jazz, he has spent recent years focusing on reviving and showcasing the traditional sounds of his people, particularly the Sawa genres such as Esewe, Bolobo (or Mbolo-Mbolo), and Ambass-Bay.

For MJ_Muana.Mboa, music is more than just a form of artistic expression—it is a way to reconnect with the past, celebrate his culture, and share it with the world. His work is rooted in the rhythms, stories, and traditions of the African folklore that have long been the heartbeat of the Sawa people. The satisfaction he derives from seeing people embrace and enjoy these ancestral sounds drives his passion, as he breathes new life into traditional music and ensures it remains relevant for future generations.

Insert picture of him

THE FAKO PEOPLE:

A Rich Tapestry Of Culture And Heritage



The Clans of Fako: Guardians of Tradition and Identity”

The Fako people are a diverse and vibrant community, made up of several clans, including the Bakweries, the Bambokos, the Isubus, the Wovias, the Balongs, and the Mongos. Each group contributes to the cultural fabric of the region, enriching the collective heritage of the Fako.

The Bakweries, the dominant clan, are primarily farmers, known for cultivating “Likawo,” a staple crop that produces cocoyams. They are skilled hunters, using guns, traps, and hunting dogs, and excel in apiculture, producing high-quality honey. Unfortunately, their weaving culture is rapidly fading and needs revitalization. Their emblem is the elephant, symbolizing strength and resilience. Their primary dish, “Wolanga na Ngonya kpala-la,” along with plantains and cassava, forms the basis of their diet. The Bakweries are renowned for their hospitality, often to a fault, welcoming strangers with open arms. They have embraced modernity while staying rooted in their cultural heritage, showcasing a unique blend of tradition and contemporary style. The women proudly wear beautifully stitched ‘Sawa’ Kabas,

paired with matching headscarves or traditional mat caps, while the men don white long-sleeved shirts worn over loincloths, complemented by sandals, hats, and walking staffs. In recent times, they have adopted royal-inspired shirts adorned with beads and circled caps, further symbolizing their distinct identity and pride in their heritage.

The Balongs of the Muyuka Subdivision, where some Bakweri people also reside, share many cultural similarities with the Bakweri, with a few notable distinctions. While both groups cultivate cassava and plantains, the Balongs’ proximity to streams has shaped their unique approach to fishing. They practice a method known as “liyo”, using a distinctive funnel-shaped basket called “njawo” to catch fish. In terms of diet, the Balongs’ culinary preferences closely mirror those of the Bakweri, with a strong emphasis on crab and mudfish hunting, which form key components of their traditional cuisine.

The Wovias and Bota Landers, found along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, are primarily engaged in fishing, with “Morzombo” being their main occupation. They use fishing boats, which are also used in canoe races. Like the

Bakweries, they are also farmers, cultivating crops such as bananas, yams, and other varieties like the Water Yam, Sweet Yam, and Creeping Yam Known as “Hwato Hwa Mbota,” meaning “People of Agriculture.”. Their name “Bota”, has evolved from the mispronunciation of “Mbota” by early explorers and missionaries. Their diet includes fish, groundnuts, and “Mokoni,” a pudding made from groundnuts and egusi, often eaten with “Massoma” and “Meyondo” (cassava-based foods). Their dress is in keeping with the unique Fako style.

The Isubus are both farmers and fishermen, with the men working together to produce farming tools. They are known for growing yams and smoking fish, which they store in baskets called “Ndenge.” The women engage in trade, bartering fish for goods like Accra bananas, groundnuts, and koki beans. Their fish is dried in bamboo and palm tree barns known as “Woka”, and firewood is stored in “Etaka” (or Banda). The Isubus are divided into several families and quarters, with significant cultural and political leadership held by the Ekums of the Dikolo family.

At the heart of it all lies Womboko (also known as Bomboko or Bambokos), the ancestral homeland of these diverse Fako clans. Womboko’s culture, though distinct in some ways, shares many similarities with the other Fako groups, and it is a central theme in the ongoing cultural revival efforts. In the next issue of Mbando Ya Hvako Magazine, we will delve deeper into Womboko’s rich culture and history, alongside the efforts to preserve and protect this heritage for future generations.

This brief write-up aims to showcase the Fako people as a force to be reckoned with, united in their efforts to revive and protect their God-given culture for posterity.

Rev. Genty Eyole – Njie Ndeley
Peace and Reconciliation Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

FAKO: CAMEROON'S VIBRANT GEM FOR TOURISM AND ADVENTURE"

A Journey Through the Heart of Cameroon's History and Beauty



In the lush embrace of Cameroon's Southwest lies Fako Division, a land where history and nature entwine, creating a rich tapestry of culture, stories, and landscapes. This enchanting region is a treasure chest of Cameroon's soul, where the echoes of ancient kingdoms and the whispers of colonial pasts stir the earth beneath your feet.

At the heart of this land stands **Mount Cameroon**, Africa's highest active volcano, a towering giant that commands both awe and reverence. For centuries, the Bakweri people, its first guardians, have seen the mountain not just as a peak, but as a sacred pulse of life, its volcanic slopes cradling villages that have withstood the tests of time. The bond between the Bakweri and this mountain is one of resilience and reverence, where every stone and tree tells a story of endurance.

By the shores of Limbe lies the **Bimbia Slave Trade Museum**, a poignant reminder of a dark chapter in history. Once a bustling port, Bimbia was a gateway through which countless enslaved Africans passed on their way to the Americas. The museum stands as a quiet memorial, offering visitors a chance to reflect on the

human cost of this tragedy and to honor the memory of those who endured unspeakable suffering.

Not far from the coastline, the **Limbe Botanic Garden** unfolds a different narrative. Founded in 1892, it is one of Africa's oldest botanical gardens, where the world's flora converges. This lush haven, born of colonial ambition, tells the story of the exchange of knowledge and plants across continents, creating a living monument to both nature and history. The garden's timeless beauty offers peace and reflection, as well as a deep connection to Fako's colonial past.

Further along the coast, **Victoria Beach**—now known as **Limbe Beach**—offers a stunning view of Mount Cameroon, once a bustling port where trade and cultures mingled. Today, the beach provides a serene refuge, its golden sands stretching out beneath the eternal gaze of the mountain. It is a place where history and nature continue to merge, where the past lingers in the air like a forgotten song.

Buea, the administrative capital of Fako, stands as a living museum of colonial architecture, with structures such as the **British Residency** and the **Governor's Palace** dating

back to the early 20th century. These stately buildings offer a glimpse into a time when British influence shaped the land, their walls echoing with stories of governance and power that still reverberate through the streets of the town today.

Not far from Limbe, the **Mokunda Rock** rises from the earth, an ancient and spiritual monument for the Bakweri people. For generations, it has been a site of sacred rituals and cultural ceremonies, its significance rooted deeply in the community's connection to the land and their ancestors. The rock, both a natural wonder and cultural symbol, stands as a testament to the enduring spirituality of the people.

Scattered across the volcanic slopes of Mount Cameroon, traditional villages offer an intimate glimpse into Fako's vibrant cultural heritage. These villages, alive with ancient customs, dances, and languages, embody the spirit of the Bakweri and other indigenous groups. To visit these communities is to step into a world where time moves differently—where the past is ever-present and the stories of old are told with every rhythm of the drum.

Today, Fako Division stands as a living testament to the resilience of its people and the enduring strength of its heritage. From the towering peak of Mount Cameroon to the solemn lessons of Bimbia, from the peaceful beauty of the Limbe Botanic Garden to the historical echoes along Limbe Beach, Fako is a place where history is not merely remembered, but felt. It is a land where the past lives on, carried in the wind, whispered in the stones, and forever etched into the hearts of those who walk its soil. Fako's legacy, rich in cultural and historical depth, ensures that the stories of its people will endure, forever woven into the fabric of this breathtaking land.

Iya Dr. Molirza M'Efange
Communication Committee,
MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Discovering Fako's Cultural Soul through "MBANDO YA PHAKO"

(MBANDO: A Mystique and Celebration)

In the fast-flowing river of time, the world spins ever faster, caught in the tide of global currents that sweep across the land. The age-old rhythms of tradition are often drowned out by the deafening roar of modernity, pulling us farther from the ways of our ancestors. As cultures collide and blend, some ancient voices are lost in the cacophony, while others rise, resilient, their echoes reaching across generations. In Fako, the hearts of the people beat at the crossroads of this dance—a fusion of cultures, a clash of worlds. The absence of leadership in the chiefdoms of Buea and Limbe only deepened the silence, calling for a rekindling of what was once lost. And so, from the ashes of this cultural challenge, MBANDO YA PHAKO emerged, a beacon to light the way forward, to breathe life back into the spirit of Fako.

The Million Dollar Question is WHAT IS MBANDO??

MBANDO is more than a festival—it is a bridge between worlds, where the mystical and the celebratory intertwine like sacred threads in a tapestry. It is a time-honored gathering, where the soul of Fako is revealed in its many forms:

Social Culture: The pulse of the community is felt in every dance step, every graceful movement in the ballet, and every vibrant fashion parade.

Material Culture: The rich textures of the land are brought to life through traditional architecture, art, crafts, regal attire, and the flavors that fill the air with the scent of ancestral wisdom.

Oral Culture: The voices of the elders echo through time in songs, folklore, stories, proverbs, and riddles—words that carry the weight of history and the wisdom of generations.

Literary and Print Culture: In the written word, in language preserved and creative writings, the intellectual soul of Fako finds its voice, echoing the ancient knowledge of its people.

The festival welcomes all, inviting participation in its joyous celebrations—through dance, feasts, and vibrant



displays of creativity. Yet beneath the merriment lies a deeper, more secretive layer—a mystical ritual, known only to a select few, who invoke powers that dance in the shadows of the night before the public festivities begin.

The Sacred History of the MBANDO

The origins of MBANDO stretch back to the very dawn of the Bakweri people. Its true birth may be lost to time, hidden in the folds of unwritten history, but its flame has burned brightly, passed from one generation to the next. In days of old, Mbando served as the heart of the village, a force that held communities together in the face of external threats, a rallying cry for love and unity. It was a time to reflect, to take stock of the well-being of the people, and to seek guidance from the divine. Messages from the goddess of the sea, Liengu la Nwanja, and the god of the mountain, Efarza Moto, were said to offer solutions to the challenges faced by the people.

In the past, MBANDO was a local affair, a village celebration, but as the winds of change blew, visionaries like Naliomo Dr. Esuka Endeley and Ikan-
ea Elufa Manga Williams recognized

the need to expand the festival's reach. Today, MBANDO YA PHAKO has grown to encompass all villages of Fako and also the wider region, yet the sacred rites remain the domain of the spiritual leaders, whose knowledge guards the mystical secrets of the event.

A Call to Preserve Our Heritage

MBANDO YA PHAKO is not just a festival; it is a living, breathing embodiment of Fako's identity. It is a call to action, a way to address the pressing issues of our time—social, economic, and cultural—while reaffirming our collective spirit. It is a reminder that, though the world may change, the heart of Fako beats strong, resolute, and unyielding.

To ensure that this cultural legacy endures for generations to come, we must build a sanctuary—the Fako Multipurpose Cultural Center, a place where Fako's history, language, and art can be preserved. A museum to house the artifacts of our past, language laboratories to keep our tongues alive, and conference halls where the exchange of ideas can ignite the future.

To bring this dream to fruition, we call upon the support of government ministries, partners, sponsors, and the sons and daughters of Fako, both within Cameroon and in the diaspora. By contributing to this cause, you will leave a lasting mark on history—ensuring that the cultural flame of Fako will burn bright for all time. With MBANDO YA PHAKO, we are not just celebrating the past; we are shaping the future. We are rewriting the narrative, ensuring that Fako remains a beacon of pride, resilience, and cultural brilliance for generations to come.

Iya Frida Likowo

THE FAKO MULTI-CULTURAL CENTRE (FMCC): A Sustainable Venture For The Mbando Ya Phvako!

Our ancestors were wise to compose the legendary melody:

Mwana liwiye aokise' mbowa monyengi... eteme jende imo kavanelle. Eeleh, Tata (Iya) eeleh!!



Wa Tate na Wa Iye, out of the prolonged cultural slumber that the Fako people drifted into for over two decades, and the enduring yearnings of our dynamic and blessed descendants of Womboko, the Fako communities are awakening, reconnecting with their cultures and traditions, determined to never fall back into the shadows. Culture, after all, is the soul of a people, passed down through generations, and we are determined to ensure it thrives for the generations to come.

This cultural revival, seen in the growing festivals, rituals, and traditions, marks a turning point for the Fako people. The coronation of two first-class monarchs, Naliomo Dr. Robert Esuka Endeley and Ikanea Elufa Manga Williams, sparked a cultural revolution. Their leadership has proven that a ruler's wisdom is not in words alone, but in actions. This reawakening is a direct result of their unwavering commitment to revive our traditions, fulfilling the promise they made during their reigns.

At the heart of this revival stands the Fako Multi-Purpose Cultural Centre (FMCC), a visionary project that will expand the cultural horizon of our community. For too long, we've heard powerful speeches and witnessed courageous battles, but little has been done to honor and pre-

serve our ancestral rites. Imagine that the tomb of Kuv'a Likenye, founder of the Buea Dynasty, lies in ruin, forgotten. How can we progress without honoring our heroes?? Icons dead or alive like Dr. Emmanuel Mbella Liffafa Endeley, Paul Monyongo Mo Kale, Motomby Woleta, Litumbe Ekesse, Manga Ma Nambeke, Chief Gervaisus Mbella Endeley, Chief, SML Endeley, Martin Ngeka Luma, Peter Mafany Musonge, Inoni Ephraim, Dr. Charles Nammeh Menyoli, Prof. Limunga La Njeuma, CEO Kate Kanye-Fotso, Prof. Nalova Lyonga, Hon. Paul Njie Meoto, Churchill Monono, Emilia Lifaka, Henry Njalla Quan, Ekema Patrick, Andrew Motanga, Mola Njoh Litumbe, Sen. Mbella Moki Charles and Chief PM Ewusi deserve to be immortalized in our history.

The FMCC will be a cultural village that blends the past, present, and future. With state-of-the-art traditional architecture and artifacts, it will be a hub for exhibitions where tradition meets modernity—featuring museums, libraries, theatres, monuments, and more. Nestled at the foot of Fako Mountain in Gbea, the FMCC will offer stunning views of the surrounding towns and embody the spirit of MBANDO. It will be a space for cultural immersion, talent discovery, language preservation, and youth empowerment. This project will be a sustainable venture that not only benefits Fako but Cameroon as a whole.

As Naliomo once said, "It will stand as a testament to our identity and heritage."

To bring this vision to life, the Trust Fund Committee (TFC) has been established to manage funds and ensure transparency. This monumental project requires the collective support of Fako citizens, both at home and abroad. After a successful fundraising campaign in the diaspora, with contributions from notable figures such as business leader Kate Kayi, we are moving forward. Funds are being deposited at the Phako Credit Utility (PCU), but more work is needed to ensure its success.

Some Key Actions for Success by the TFC include:

1. Fundraising during MBANDO festivals and beyond.
2. Village-to-village contributions through chiefs.
3. National and international fundraising tours.
4. Collaboration with corporate partners and embassies.
5. Ongoing appeals to elites and friends of Fako.

The inaugural fundraising event at Mokunda Palace in March 2023 successfully raised 24 million francs, with generous contributions from across the diaspora. Since then, additional fundraising activities have taken place, further highlighting the unwavering commitment and collective efforts of the Fako communities. The MBANDO drive continues to grow, and your support is crucial to realizing this dream.

Wonyamoe, 'ESEWA na JIMBI! As we celebrate those who have made initial contributions, we pray for God's blessings on them and those yet to join this cause. This is a call to all Fako citizens—together, we can make this vision a reality. It's a new dawn for Fako, a collective effort to rebuild our community. Join this brilliant initiative, for "a people without culture is like a tree without roots!"

Mola Njie Kale
Chairman of the Fako Multi-Purpose Center Trust Fund Committee (TFC)

Cultural Food – A Taste of Tradition!!



In a vibrant celebration of culture and unity, the Female Executives of the Bakweri Youth Association (BAYA), led by President Luma David from Great Soppo, Buea, and Vice President Bisi Kofi Limunga Gaele from Wovia village in Limbe, hosted a remarkable cookery event in Buea to mark the conclusion of their year-end activities.

The event, held on Saturday, November 16, 2024, was a testament to the association's core value of MOLATAKO—which means "Togetherness." This powerful theme was brought to life as the dynamic women of the association came together to celebrate empowerment and camaraderie. From the shores to the mountaintops, an array

of traditional dishes was prepared, each telling a story of Fako heritage and the association's deep roots in its coastal and mountainous landscapes.

The culinary journey began with coastal specialties such as "Munyan-ya" and "Mbunda Ngelé"—a delicious dish of fresh fish seasoned with salt, pepper, and red oil, wrapped in a bundle. The feast then transitioned to beloved Bakweri staples, including "Timanabusa"; Kwacoco with Banga Soup, "Ngonya Wembe", a hearty black soup made from boiled coco leaves and pounded cocoyams, and the ever delicious "Endeley bread", otherwise called kwacoco bible.

With solidarity is at the heart of BAYA's mission, the association engages in impactful outreach projects, supporting the entrepreneurial ventures of its members, and fostering an unbreakable bond among its members, united by their shared vision.

Together, the Bakweri Youths Association remains a powerful force within both the national and international landscapes of Cameroon, and as time passes, the remarkable journey of this association will surely be documented for posterity.

Iya Mary Lyonga Ndinge,
BAYA PRC Committee Member



E MBANDO

At that eerie end of Mboa,
The linyai la Mbando laidback asleep
Only guarded by the spirits
Converging spirits that barely slept
Our lands and farms they kept
No wonder our soils were rich

Are these spirits now asleep?
Or has our linyai been sold?
Where then do our spirits converge?
How can the land be saved?
Are we our own doom?
We need the linyai la Mbando back!

At the center of Mboa we should meet,
Our erzanjas on our waists,
Maluwa in our hands,
As we rzomelele on the new linyai,
The symbol of our strength
Beams of light on the horizon.

Mola Dr. Ngale Maenye
CEO Hvako Enterprise, Communication Com-
mittee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

The Beauty in Fako Culture

“Liwa la Ndolo”

In the heart of Fako Division, where the mountains meet the sea and the rhythms of tradition pulse through the land, marriage is not just a union of two hearts—it is a solemn declaration of responsibility, a bridge between the past and the future. To marry in Fako is to step into a role as a nurturer of community, an upholder of culture, and a participant in a cycle of life that has been passed down through the ages.

In the days of old, child betrothal was a common practice—an arrangement made by families, often long before the young ones had even begun to dream of love. But as time has unfurled its wings and the world has changed, this practice has faded like a distant memory. Today, young men in Fako work with steadfast determination, saving every coin, preparing themselves for the significant responsibility of marriage. Though the weight of these duties often rests on the groom's shoulders, help may come in the form of family—both maternal and paternal—who lend a hand in ensuring that the marriage ceremony unfolds with the dignity and respect it demands.

Marriage in Fako is a journey of several stages, each one imbued with significance and cultural depth. It is a path laid down with patience and intention, guided by the elders, and steeped in rituals that honor both families. The process begins with the introduction, a day when the groom, accompanied by his immediate family, makes the first step towards uniting with the bride. In the Mongo area, this day is called “Telele Ewande”, and it marks the moment when the groom's family expresses their interest in the bride. It is a moment of inquiry, of investigation, as both families begin to seek out the truth of each other's lineage, character, and readiness for the great responsibility of marriage.

Following the introduction, the next phase is known as the knock door, a moment when the groom's intentions are formally laid bare before the bride's family. It is here that both sides exchange information and begin the sacred task of negotiation. In Mongo, this phase is called “Jomba la Jombe”, while the Bakweri people from Mbenga Mboa and Lelu la Mboa refer to it as “Likumba la Liowa”. It is a day that sets the tone for everything that follows, as



the groom's family is handed a list—an itemized catalogue of what they must provide in the next stage of the journey.

The third stage is the engagement, an occasion of celebration and anticipation. In Buea and Limbe, this phase is called “Ewanda”. It is here that the bride's family presents the requested items, symbolizing their approval and support for the union. The groom's family, in return, expresses their gratitude and formalizes their commitment. In Mongo, the engagement takes on the name “Bededi Batumba”, and here, too, the exchange of goods is part of the ritual. It is also the day when the groom is given his bride, who is accompanied by the elders—mothers who guide her steps, ensuring she walks into her new life with dignity.

Once the engagement is complete, the final stage of the marriage process comes—the dowry payment, known as “Evio”. This sacred rite takes place at the groom's father's house, where the cash dowry is handed over, and a pig is offered as a symbol of prosperity and honor. The pig is not just for ceremony—it becomes the feast that sustains the community. A second pig is slaughtered to provide food for everyone present, a gesture of sharing that strengthens the bonds between

the two families.

Yet, even after this ritual is complete, the marriage continues. The dowry is never fully paid in one moment, for in the land of Fako, a man's connection to his wife's family is ongoing. As time goes by, he continues to give, ensuring that the ties of kinship are not just ceremonial but woven into the fabric of everyday life.

In Fako, marriage is not simply a rite of passage; it is a declaration of belonging. It is a way of saying, “I am ready to carry the weight of my ancestors, to honor the community that raised me, and to build a future with the woman I love.” Each stage of the journey—each exchange, each ritual, and each moment of connection—is a step towards fulfilling that promise.

Marriage in Fako is, in many ways, a living testament to the strength and beauty of tradition. It is a celebration of heritage, love, and community—a timeless dance that has evolved with the times but remains deeply rooted in the values of responsibility, respect, and the power of family.

Iya Lilian Efeti Mbua-Liombe
Communications Committee,
MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

THE MARLEY DANCE: A Spectator's Perspective



Introduction

The Marley Dance, often referred to as the “dance of the elephants”, is one of the most enigmatic and revered traditions still alive within the Bakweri culture. This captivating ritual, steeped in history and mystery, remains an important expression of the Bakweri people, one of the Bantu ethnic groups residing on the southeastern slopes of Mount Cameroon, in Fako. Among the many cultural treasures of the region, the Marley Dance stands as a striking reminder of the deep ties between the Bakweri people and their ancestral customs.

Origin of the Bakweri People

The Bakweri, or Kwe, have long inhabited the lush terrain of Mount Cameroon. Known for their skills in fishing, farming, and hunting, they settled in the fertile regions along the mountain's lower slopes, particularly in Buea, which rests at about 3,000 feet. The Bakweri people belong to the broader Sawa group of coastal peoples and share a Bantu linguistic and cultural heritage.

The Bakweri trace their origins to the lower Womboko (Bomboko) region, behind Mount Fako, with their communities largely founded by groups from villages that settled in a belt between 650m and 1000m up the slopes of the

mountain. These ancestors paved the way for the rich cultural traditions that the Bakweri people uphold today.

The Origin of the Marley Dance

The Marley Dance has its roots in the Oroko clan, a neighboring group of the Bakweri people. Over time, it was introduced to the Bakweri by a handful of brave individuals, who carried this sacred dance across the cultural divide.

The Ritual Preparations

The Marley Dance is primarily hosted by villages within the Bakweri community, each of which must have initiated dancers who are part of a special cult. Before the event, the hosting village extends a traditional invitation—called *kombe*—to other participating villages. These villages are known to be part of the *ewanga* (the dance clan). Detailed preparations for the event are kept secret and only shared among initiated dancers and elders of the participating villages.

The Dance

The Marley Dance typically takes place during the dry season, from December to June, occurring over two days each week—Saturday and Sunday. As the dance begins on Saturday, the participating villages—*hwekomes*—arrive on foot, chanting traditional songs as they

make their way to the Marley field. The foreman leads the procession, carrying a cutlass that he uses to strike the ground in rhythm, his actions symbolizing the driving away of spirits and marking the path for his followers. His haunting calls, often accompanied by his followers chanting in response, invoke the spirits of ancestors, creating a deep connection to the past.

As the procession reaches the *ewoka ya Marley* (Marley Field), a communal space that doubles as a football and wrestling ground, the dancers settle in designated areas, marked by poles where flags are hoisted to signify their position. The groups chant in unison songs that are known only to those initiated in the dance. A typical chant might sound like: “*Oyambe yambe sa, oyambe yambe sa, oyambe o Marley oh, oyambe yambe sa,*” a refrain that echoes through the air, weaving the past with the present.

As night falls, a large fire (*monda*) is lit at the center of the field, and the dancers of the Marley Dance perform around the flames, their movements a powerful tribute to the spirits of the land. The drumming intensifies, telling the timeless story of their rich cultural heritage, as the dancers continue, their bodies swaying to the rhythm until the flames naturally die out.

Sunday, the climax of the dance, brings with it the awe-inspiring spectacle of the elephants—figurative dancers whose movements mimic the majestic creatures they are named after. The *morzeke* (the star performer of the day) leads this segment, captivating the audience with a display of beautiful and intricate dance steps. The crowd, mesmerized, watches in silent admiration as the dancers bring this ancient ritual to life.

The Marley Dance is an unforgettable experience for those fortunate enough to witness it. Though many of its deeper meanings remain reserved for initiated members, the dance itself is a beautiful representation of the Bakweri people's enduring cultural legacy. Each movement, each drumbeat, and each chant carry the weight of centuries of history, making the Marley Dance not just a performance but a living connection to the past.

Mola Dr. Ngale Maenye
CEO *Hvako Enterprise*
Communication Committee, MBANDO
CULTURAL FESTIVAL

"MAITO": The Tradition of Fireside Conversations



Indigenous storytelling, particularly the "Maito Ma Wakpe" of the Bakweri people, is much more than an art form; it is a rich educational tool deeply embedded in the community's informal learning system. Rooted in the cultural fabric of the Bakweri, an ethnic group from Mount Fako in Cameroon, these stories are powerful agents of cultural preservation, moral guidance, and community cohesion. Far beyond entertainment, they are the vessels through which knowledge, values, and traditions flow from one generation to the next.

Historically, storytelling played a central role in the Bakweri community, especially during the evening hours when the moon illuminated the skies. These gatherings, where elders shared tales around a crackling fire, were more than just social events; they were essential learning experiences for younger generations. These stories, rich with myths, legends, and moral lessons, often spoke of gods, heroes, and the deep connections between the natural and supernatural worlds. They shaped the moral compass of youth, offering guidance through life's struggles, from personal failure to societal challenges like death and hardship. As one Bakweri saying goes, "Ngomba eliani njenga ezraa tuwah," signifying the duty to recognize and honor the

knowledge of our ancestors.

Yet, in modern times, the value of these stories seems to be fading, as older generations are sometimes dismissed as "witches" or "wizards," their wisdom no longer sought or appreciated. This cultural shift represents the erosion of a knowledge system once central to navigating the complexities of life. The loss is not only of stories but of a deeply rooted educational tradition that provided practical solutions to the community's needs.

In the past, storytelling sessions were immersive cultural experiences that went far beyond the act of telling stories. The evenings were marked by communal feasts—roasted pork, cocoyams, and other game—creating an environment of celebration and learning. The food, the dance, and the music combined to form an interactive, learner-centered space where younger generations absorbed cultural teachings through multiple senses. This holistic approach to education helped reinforce the messages embedded in the stories, making the lessons more meaningful and memorable.

The influence of indigenous storytelling extends far beyond the Bakweri community. Celebrated writers like Chinua Achebe, Elechi Amandi, and Bate Bessong were deeply influenced by the traditions of oral storytelling, highlighting its significance not only in African literature but in shaping the broader educational experience of many cultures. Storytelling, therefore, becomes a bridge not only for understanding one's own cultural identity but also for fostering empathy and awareness of the lives and struggles of others.

The importance of storytelling cannot be

overstated. It serves as a dynamic tool for preserving ancient cultures while simultaneously creating space for new cultural narratives. These stories are not simply a reflection of the past; they are essential for dealing with contemporary issues. They provide a sense of identity, connecting individuals to their ancestral roots and instilling pride in their heritage. Through these stories, the community passes down important life lessons—whether through tales of triumph, resilience, or everyday struggles—that help individuals navigate the complexities of their own lives.

Moreover, storytelling plays an integral role in language development. The rhythmic cadence of stories, their dramatic flair, and the use of vivid imagery enrich the listener's vocabulary, fluency, and communication skills. Young listeners, rather than passively receiving information, actively engage with the stories, interpreting and analyzing them. This process stimulates their imaginations, encourages critical thinking, and sparks curiosity about the world around them.

For the Bakweri, legendary tales like Yoma Ndene, Tua Bangilele, Njambitute, Nene, Wawa, and Mbando Lior Lior are more than stories; they are moral compasses. Each one carries profound lessons that serve to guide and shape the community's values. For instance, the story of Evazra'a Moto imparts the importance of balancing human strength with respect for the spiritual forces that govern the world. These stories are more than relics of the past; they are the living heartbeat of Bakweri culture, ensuring that tradition and wisdom are carried forward to the next generation.

Storytelling is more than just a way to share tales; it is a powerful tool for discovering one's identity and understanding their place within the broader community. It strengthens social bonds, fosters solidarity, and creates a shared sense of belonging. Beyond the visible aspects—such as food, clothing, dance, and language—storytelling serves as the gateway to deeper cultural wisdom. It carries the values, beliefs, and customs that shape how we view the world. Through this oral tradition, the timeless wisdom of our ancestors is passed down, guiding future generations while keeping them grounded in their heritage.

We are called to preserve and celebrate storytelling, for it is more than just a form of communication—it is the vibrant thread that links us to our past, shapes our present, and enriches our future.

Ndumbe Lyonga La Manjinjaa
(M.Ed. CST).

Knight of Academic honors, cultural promoter, headteacher



The Story Of The First Bakweri Man Who Attempted To Marry A Mermaid

By Naliomo Robert Esuka Mbella
Endeley, Ph.D.

(The story was originally narrated to me by the late Tata Mbua Ndoko)

In the emerald heart of the Mokpe kingdom, lived Mola Motongo mo Nganga Rzinge, a magician, a renowned medicine man whose name danced on tongues like smoke in the wind. He was a weaver of spells, a tamer of the unseen. During a somber Eyu (memorial festival of a wealthy deceased person) in the village of Etome, on the West Coast, his boast echoed through the crowd – he said his next bride would be no mortal woman, but Liyengu la mwanja mo Hwakingili na Hwatoke (the mermaid queen of the seas of Bakingili and Batoke).

One beautiful Thursday afternoon, bathed in the honeyed glow of dawn, the mermaid queen, Liyengu la Mwanja mo Hwakingili na Hwatoke, perched on the Nyango na Mwaana rocks, the mystical rocks in the West Coast of Limbe that project above the sea. Her hair, long as seaweed and shimmering like moonlight as she shampooed it with gentle strokes. She shampoos her hair every Thursday afternoon and Saturday morning. But her tranquility shattered when Mola Motongo, armed with fetishes and flanked by two thugs, descended upon her from a rickety canoe and grabbed her from behind.

With a loud cry, Mola snatched Liyengu's njoo-la, a truncheon that held the tide of her magical powers. Stripped of her power, the queen's emerald eyes narrowed. "Who dares disrupt my kingdom?" her voice rolled like thunder over the waves. "I, Mola Motongo mo Nganga Rzinge," the magician proclaimed, "your soon-to-be husband!" A smirk played on Liyengu's lips as she said: "Ok Then let us sail to Bakingili, so you may meet my parents." Mola Motongo and his thugs carried the Liyengu into their canoe from the rocks.

As their canoe sliced through the waves, Mola Motongo, blinded by pride, sang along the way: na wheni woolo wo nyama o malihwa, woo-fi na e-mwana



ngondo". "I have a canoe filled with fish at the beach and there is also a teenage girl in the canoe"

Oblivious to the fire simmering in Liyengu's eyes. When Bakingili's golden beach glittered in the distance, he envisioned a triumphant arrival, cheers echoing his name, phombowo! Phombowo! Moombi wey! (congratulations! congratulations! You have a new bride!). When Motongo saw the cheering crowd that was waiting for him at the beach at Bakingili and feeling satisfied with the trend of events Motongo sang merrily: na wheni woolo wo nyama o malihwa, woo-fi na e-mwana ngondo". "I have a canoe filled with fish at the beach. There is also a teenage girl in the canoe" The cheering crowd echoed: Yes, yes, indeed there is a teenage girl in your canoe (e joke, e joke, woofi na e mwana ngondo).

But Liyengu had other plans. When the cheering crowd attempted to carry the Liyengu out of the canoe at the beach, she unleashed a whispered

power, plunging the beach into an inky darkness. Panic crackled in the air as the crowd stumbled, and a stampede ensued, blinded and confused. In that chaos, Liyengu slipped free, her emerald form melting into the waves, leaving only her abandoned njoo-la in the canoe. The entire beach was still in total darkness.

Only then did an elder's voice rise, cutting through the darkness. "Throw her njoo-la back! It holds her power!" an elderly lady from Batoke cried. Following her wisdom, they cast the truncheon into the churning sea. Slowly, light bled back into the sky, chasing away the shadows.

And so, the tale of Mola Motongo mo Nganga Rzinge, the man who dared court a mermaid queen, became a cautionary whisper on the wind. A reminder that even the mightiest sorcerer can be outwitted by the cunning of the sea and the hidden depths of a woman's heart.

NDONDONDUME HWA MBENG'a MALIWA

- *The Deceptive Suitor*

By Naliomo Robert Esuka Mbella
Endeley, Ph.D

In the lush, vibrant land of the Mokpes, there lived a young woman named Molonga. Her beauty was renowned far and wide, and those who beheld her likened her to the graceful antelope that roamed the open plains. Molonga's skin, a rich, burnished ebony, was a testament to nature's artistry, and her long neck and graceful stride left everyone enchanted.

News of her extraordinary beauty spread like wildfire through the forest of the mountain, carried on the wings of the birds who were captivated by her presence. Suitors traveled from the far reaches of Mokpe land, from the serene Mwangai village to the bustling Mokunda mo mbenge, from the serene Wonadikombo to the lively Wonakanda. They came bearing gifts and heartfelt pleas, all vying for Molonga's affection. Yet, despite the parade of admirers, she carried a flaw that eclipsed her radiance – an overwhelming pride. Molonga believed that none were worthy of her love, for she considered herself above the common village boys.

It was during these times of admiration and rejection that a newcomer, Ndondondume hwa mbeng'a malihwa, appeared on the scene. He was a vision of elegance, dressed in finery that bespoke immense wealth, from his head to his toes. Molonga was beguiled by his opulence, and she saw in him a suitor that finally matched her elevated standards. Little did she know, Ndondondume hwa mbeng'a malihwa was not what he seemed.

Hidden beneath his charismatic exterior, Ndondondume had borrowed the beautiful appearances and smooth skin of various animals and birds. He had cleverly crafted a facade that portrayed him as a prosperous man of



means. Deceptively, he won Molonga's heart and married her with the sinister intention of consuming her.

After the wedding, the very animals and birds from whom Ndondondume had borrowed his skin and looks decided to intervene. They dispatched emissaries in the form of the wise parrot (Orzo) and the solemn owl (Erzo). These envoys came to Ndondondume, urging him to return what he had taken from their fellow creatures.

It was then that Molonga's life took a shocking turn. Curiosity gnawed at her, and she dared to peek beneath her husband's splendid feathers, beneath the rich coat of fur he wore.

What she uncovered was not the image of opulence she had wed, but the grotesque sight of a scaly monster lurking beneath.

Word spread swiftly through the Mokpe forest, and the animals of the entire animal kingdom, known as the wolynyama, convened in unity. They gathered under the broad canopy of trees, their voices rising in a harmonious chorus as they demanded the return of their borrowed fur and feathers from the treacherous Ndondondume.

THE DECLINE OF THE SEPTEMBER HARVEST: A Lament for the Sea

The September harvest, once a time of abundance, has dwindled in recent years, as both environmental and spiritual disruptions threaten the delicate balance of the sea. Overfishing, modern fishing practices, and disrespect for sacred traditions have combined to reduce the bounty of the ocean.

Shifting Fishing Practices

The adoption of smaller nets and unsustainable techniques, like large-scale crayfish harvesting, have disrupted the marine ecosystem. While intended to protect certain fish, these practices have reduced the overall catch and endangered vital species, such as crayfish, which serve as food for other fish.

Disrespect for Ancestral Spirits

The sea is home to ancestral spirits, and their blessings are crucial for a successful harvest. However, coastal development near sacred sites and the violation of spiritual areas have angered these spirits. Modern activities that disregard the sea's natural rhythms, such as overfishing and pollution, further harm the ecosystem and its ability to rejuvenate.

The Whale's Role

The whale, a symbol of the harvest, plays a vital role in the ecosystem. From September to November, the whale brings blessings to the land by carrying fish species. If the sacred path to the stream is blocked, the whale returns without its bounty, affecting both the whale hunt and the fish population.

Other Disruptions

Pollution, noise from loud music, and the use of forbidden fruits near the sea have also disturbed the spirits. Unlawful diving in sacred areas and the spilling of blood in the ocean further disrupt the balance, leading to a decline in fish populations and the overall health of the sea.

The Role of Sacred Sites and Rituals

Sacred sites like "Nyango Na Mwana" and Naghtigal Lighthouse are crucial for maintaining harmony between the sea and land. The decline in traditional

rituals and the improper timing of these rites have caused the ancestors to withhold their blessings, further exacerbating the harvest's decline.

A Call for Restoration!!

The September harvest's decline is a reminder of the importance of respecting both the environment and the ancestral traditions that have long sustained it. To restore the harvest, we must return to the practices that honor the sea's natural cycles and the spirits who guide its abundance.

HRM, Chief Osward Ekomboni I of Ndambe Island
Culture Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

FAKO TRANSPORT AND SHIPPING COMPANY LIMITED (FAKOSHIP):

Founded in 1973 by the late Dr. Charles NAMME MENYOLI, FAKOSHIP LTD has long been a leader in Cameroon's maritime and para-maritime industries. Under the visionary leadership of Thomas MALELU MENYOLI, the company is ushering in a new era of growth and innovation. With a dynamic management team, FAKOSHIP is expanding its reach and enhancing its operations both in the maritime sector and beyond.

A key player in Cameroon's maritime landscape, FAKOSHIP CAPE LIMBOH TOWING AND MOORING COMPANY LTD provides vital towing and mooring services at the Cape Limboh Petroleum Terminal, serving major national entities like SONARA and CNIC. The company's strategic 10-year concession with the Port Authority of Douala (PAD), signed in 2018, strengthens its position as a leader in the sector. To further enhance its services, FAKOSHIP



has invested 7 billion CFA Francs in acquiring two tugboats and advanced nautical equipment, fully funded by Afriland First Bank.

Beyond maritime services, FAKOSHIP has made significant strides in real estate, with developments like the FAKOSHIP PLAZA in Buea and Limbe, and ongoing projects such as the twelve R+3 residential buildings in Bulu and an R+2 residential and commercial project at Government Station Buea, set to complete by early 2025. The company also plans to launch its maritime transport division by mid-2025.

In 2021, FAKOSHIP won a national tender for mooring services at the Port of Douala-Bonaberi, leading to the formation of Douala Mooring Company PLC (DMC). With a clear roadmap for the future, FAKOSHIP is set to remain a cornerstone of Cameroon's maritime and real estate industries, driven by innovation and a commitment to excellence.

TRADITIONAL WRESTLING: The Sport and Cultural Legacy of the Fako People



For generations, traditional wrestling—known as “Wezruwa” in the Mokpe language and Pala-Pala in local Pidgin—has been more than just a sport for the Fako people. It has been a cultural cornerstone, fostering community bonds, teaching discipline, and celebrating physical prowess. From the rhythmic beats of the “Njimbi” drums to the spirited chants of wrestlers and fans, traditional wrestling has captivated the people of Fako, leaving a lasting impact on the region’s children and the broader Cameroonian community.

“The beauty of this sport is unforgettable. After years of silence, it’s a joy to witness traditional wrestling again,” says one fan in Limbe, reflecting the sentiment of many who cherish the ancient sport. Despite its challenges in recent years, traditional wrestling remains a vital part of Fako’s cultural fabric.

Challenges and Resurgence

Sadly, traditional wrestling in Fako has faced several challenges, including a lack of participation from some areas. Out of the four zones in the Fako Tra-

ditional Wrestling Association—Zone A (Buea), Zone B (Limbe), Zone C (Tiko), and Zone D (Muyuka)—only Zone A and Zone B have seen active participation in recent years. For over a decade, Zone B was dormant, while Zone A experienced a two-year hiatus. The revival efforts began in earnest when Mola Njie Ewome, president of the Fako Divisional Bureau, alongside Iya Susan Menyoli and other Zone A members, visited Limbe to reignite interest in the sport. Mola Paul Kalle took over the leadership of Zone B, and since then, the sport has started to regain its footing. Although the efforts to revive wrestling in Zones C and D have yet to bear fruit, but there is hope that the other regions will follow the example set by Zones A and B.

Wrestling and Community

Wrestling in Fako is not just about competition—it’s about culture, community, and connection. Each weekend, children rush to the Pala-Pala fields after school, eager to refine their techniques ahead of the Sunday bouts. Villagers and business owners also play an important role, setting up stalls and preparing food and

drinks for the spectators. “When Pala-Pala comes to the village, we business people are happy because our sales always go up,” says one vendor.

From December to May, the sport moves from village to village, with communities like Wokwai, Wonakanda, Wowa, and Wokova in Zone A regularly hosting matches. In Limbe, the growth of the sport has been impressive, with the number of participating villages expanding from three in 2023 to nine in 2024. Villages like Bobende, Wovia, Mokunda, and Ngeme have become key players in the wrestling scene, showcasing physical strength and cultural pride. These events are a moment for mothers to show their love for their sons, adding an emotional layer to the sport.

The Future of Traditional Wrestling
Despite the challenges, there is an unwavering commitment to preserving traditional wrestling. According to Mola Ewome Njie, president of the Fako Divisional Bureau, “Traditional wrestling will not and cannot die. It’s our duty to safeguard this heritage, handed down by our

ancestors, and we must do everything within our powers to ensure its survival.”

The Mayor of Limbe II Municipality, HRM Woka Daniel, echoed this sentiment, calling wrestling a “unifying force” for the people of Fako. Reflecting on the success of the 2024 Divisional Wrestling Finals, he praised the turnout, affirming that traditional wrestling continues to be an important part of Fako’s culture and unity.

Honoring Legends and Inspiring the Future

The contributions of past champions are still felt in the wrestling community. Legendary wrestlers like Robert Mokase, Wose Tonga, Smith Tonga, Andreas Likafi, and many others have paved the way for the younger generation, sharing their techniques and wisdom. But as the sport grows, there is hope for more female participation. After the success of Rebecca Ndolo Muambo and Violette Namondo Ikome, there is a call for more young women to embrace the sport and make their mark.

The memory of legends like Mola Tonga, Mola Ikome Mwa, Late Mola Mbwaye, and others continues to inspire new wrestlers, and their contributions are


celebrated by fans and wrestlers alike. A fervent online follower of the sport commented during the 2024 Divisional Finals: “These champions are the ones who made us fall in love with the sport, and their legacy must be respected by every new generation.”

A Global Future Despite the challenges, many individuals are dedicated to making traditional wrestling a prominent sport, akin to other African countries like Ivory Coast, Nigeria, Senegal, and Chad. With continued effort and support, wrestling in Fako has the potential to grow into a thriving industry that showcases the region’s rich cultural heritage while fostering athleticism and unity.

In conclusion, traditional wrestling is not just a sport in Fako—it’s a cultural lifeblood that connects generations, fosters community spirit, and celebrates



strength, resilience, and tradition. As the Fako community continues to invest in the revival and growth of this cultural sport, the future of “Wezruwa”/Pala-Pala looks brighter than ever.

**Mola Ekema Njoku
aka Rzango Elephant
CEO, ELEPHANT’S INFO /Communication Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL**

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THE CHARIOT OF THE GODS

A Journey Through Time and Eruption



Mount Fako, known locally as Mount Cameroon, has been a symbol of both awe and reverence for the Bakweri people. Towering over 4,100 meters, this majestic peak has erupted at least eight times in the past two centuries, each eruption marking a significant moment in the history and cultural identity of the region. Far more than just a geological event, the eruptions of Mount Fako are deeply intertwined with the spiritual and political rhythms of the Bakweri community.

The first eruption recorded in the 19th century occurred in 1800, shortly before the death of a revered local healer. For the Bakweri, this was no coincidence; the eruption was seen as an omen, a divine message that the mountain's fiery temperament was directly connected to the fate of its people. Later eruptions continued to echo the turbulent history of the region. In 1909 and again in 1922, eruptions coincided with the Bakweri's struggle for autonomy and land rights during colonial rule, signaling a powerful alignment between the forces of nature and the political upheavals that shaped the community's destiny.

In more recent history, the mountain has erupted several times in quick succession: 1982, 1999, and 2000. These eruptions were not only natural events but

were also linked to significant changes in the social and political fabric of the region. In particular, the eruption of 2000 occurred during a time of growing tension over land privatization and the death of prominent chiefs, reinforcing the belief that the mountain's power was a reflection of the community's ongoing struggles and transformations.

As the town of Buea expands, however, the mountain's presence seems to fade into the background. The rise of new roads, buildings, and modern infrastructure have altered the landscape, yet this progress comes with a price. The rapid urbanization of the area may be overshadowing the mountain's power and its role in shaping the community's fate. Modern structures, often built without regard to the unpredictable nature of Mount Fako, may be vulnerable to the same forces that have shaped the region for centuries.

The traditional homes of the Bakweri people, built with the understanding that they lived in the shadow of a mighty and unpredictable force, were once crafted to withstand volcanic eruptions and earth tremors. These homes reflected a deep respect for the mountain's power. Yet, as Buea transforms into a modern urban center, this respect appears to be waning. The quiet demeanor of Mount

Fako today may be misleading, but its dormant state should not be mistaken for peace. The mountain has erupted without warning in the past, and as recently as 2000, the eruption was tied to the privatization of the Cameroon Development Corporation, sparking tensions and fears of a larger social upheaval.

As Buea continues to grow and modernize, the pressing question remains: Are we truly prepared for the potential risks of living so close to an active volcano? The history of Mount Fako reminds us that progress should never come at the expense of safety. While the mountain may appear to be at rest for now, its dormant state is not a guarantee of tranquility. The question is not if Mount Fako will erupt again, but when. And when it does, will we be ready?

We, the people of Fako, continue to believe in the protection and guidance of Epasa Moto, the god of Mount Fako, who watches over us through both calm and storm. The mountain's enduring power is a reminder of our past and a legacy we must honor.

Mola Gobina Simon Mbwange
Communications Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

Bwinga:

A Legacy of Trade, Treaty, and Tradition

Long before the colonial powers sought to stake their claim upon Cameroon's fertile lands, the Bwinga people flourished along the coastal stretch of what is now Tiko, once known as Keka, nestled beside their neighboring Bimbia. These indigenous clans, with their rich traditions and ancient wisdom, had no intention of yielding their sovereignty to foreign invaders. The most notable resistance came from Chief Ngomba Ngeka of Bwinga, whose defiance to German annexation would become a defining moment in the region's history.

In the late 19th century, as European powers scrambled for control over Africa's bountiful resources, the Germans, driven by the quest for fertile volcanic soil to sustain their agricultural plantations, began their expansion along the southwest coast of Cameroon. Their efforts were met with fierce opposition from Chief Ngomba Ngeka, who, steadfast in protecting his people's land, rejected their entry into Bwinga. The Germans, however, were determined to plant their flag and secure the land they so coveted. Negotiations ensued, culminating in a historic agreement: the Bwinga-Germano Treaty, signed in January 1886 at the Bwinga Beach.

In this treaty, Chief Ngomba Ngeka of Bwinga and Dr. Nachtigal, acting on behalf of the German King, came to terms. The Bwinga people, while retaining certain aspects of their autonomy, ceded a large portion of their fertile land—over 500 hectares—to the German Crown, marking it as "Crown Land." This land was seen as the key to the Germans' ambitions in Cameroon, with its rich soil ideal for the establishment of plantations that would feed the industries back home in Europe. Chief Ngomba Ngeka was granted jurisdictional authority over the Bwinga villages, including Fue-Mutengene, Bokwai, Likomba, Mobita, and Meveo, and was entrusted with the power to judge disputes and levy fines, in addition to reporting to the German administration.

It was during this time that the age-old practice of Trade by Barter flourished, serving as the lifeblood of the community. The Bwinga people, together with their Bakweri neighbors from Molyko, Bulu, Wonjamba, Bokova, Wonya Imali, and Meveo, continued to uphold this ancient form of commerce, exchanging goods and services without the use of currency. Instead, they relied on simple yet effective units of exchange: basins, bowls, and baskets, known as "Ngonja", to measure and facilitate trades.

The trade took place within a meticulously organized setting, guided by the presence of a referee. The marketplace, enclosed within a fenced space known as the "Kotto," was where traders displayed their goods. At the sound of the whistle, the brotherly upper Bakweri traders would place their cocoyams, bananas, plantains, yams, and cassava, while the coastal fishermen brought baskets of fish, crabs, shrimp, and crayfish for exchange. The market day was more than just commerce; it was a sacred ritual. No contact occurred between the trading parties beforehand. The impartial referee would signal the commencement of trade by opening the gates. As the gates swung open, both coastal and upper Bakweri traders would pour in, standing beside their goods, ready to negotiate and barter. The air was thick with unspoken camaraderie and trust, a quiet testament to the enduring cultural bonds that united the communities.

This barter system not only met the practical needs of the people but also fostered social cohesion. It brought to-



gether the coastal Bakweri of Bwinga and the upper Bakweri of Molyko and beyond, creating a vibrant space for interaction, trade, and even marriage. It was here, in the bustle of the market, that new relationships were formed, and old ones were reinforced, solidifying the unity of these neighboring peoples.

The market thrived for many decades, well into the 20th century. However, in March 1976, during a visit to the Bwinga Trade by Barter Market, the District Officer of Tiko, Mr. Francis Achiri Ade, made the momentous decision to abolish this ancient trade practice. But as with all things rooted in tradition, the market could not be extinguished so easily. In the 1980s and 90s, a resurgence of the barter system occurred, with goods from surrounding areas like Mutengene, Likomba, and Tiko being exchanged for fish and seafood from the fishing ports of the Ijaws, Kalabaris, and Ogonis.

Today, the site of the Bwinga market, with its beach and wharf, stands as a silent witness to the vibrant heritage of the region. The legacy of the Bwinga-Germano Treaty and the Trade by Barter market lives on, not only in the memories of those who participated but in the very landscape itself, awaiting the day when its cultural valorization will again take center stage in the heart of Cameroon's historical narrative.

Mola Efungani Ikome Adolph,
*Mutengene Second-Class Chieftom,
 Steering Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL*
Courtesy of Fritz Meyer Njoh Ikome's Diary.

an Many Divisions

Bwinga Trade by Barter Market Abolished

The Sub Prefect for Tiko Mr. Francis Achiri Ade has abolished the trade by barter market that has been going on in Bwinga for the past several years.

Speaking in Bwinga during a recent visit, Mr. Ade said trade by barter is an ancient medium of exchange and resolved that the market should cease functioning immediately.

Mr. Ade said money which is the most modern medium of exchange should be the only power of purchase.

He said the trade by barter system is not only inconvenient but out of fashion and an abuse to civilization.

Our Reporter recalls that at the past traders from Tiko and environs carried their foodstuffs to Bwinga and exchanged them for fish with the Ijaws. How money will be used in stead.

Women Arrested for Stealing CDC Nuts

Six women were March 15 handed over to the Tiko Police by the CDC Estara Manager of Bemie Palms for stealing Palm Nuts worth 1,350 Francs CFA.

The women were arrested by a watchman Mathias Ngeke who found them in possession of CDC Palm Nuts tied in their head scarves.

Successes filing in from Tiko writes that when the women were questioned by the police, they pleaded that they had never stolen CDC nuts before and since they were first offenders, they should be pardoned.

Both the police and the Estara Manager gave deaf

MORE NURSERY SCHOOLS FOR KUMBA SOON



“THE NGANYA CULT: Guardians of the Shadowed Realms”

Introduction

The Nganya cult is the beating heart of the Bakweri people, a powerful and sacred force that defines their very existence in southwest Cameroon. Revered as the most formidable of all Bakweri cults, it is a male-dominated society, open to boys and men of nearly every age. This cult is not just a tradition; it is the pulse that runs through the veins of the community, the guardian of their culture and spiritual strength.

Initiation: A Rite of Passage

Joining the Nganya cult is no mere formality—it's a fierce, sacred journey only for those born of Bakweri blood. The initiation is a hidden, guarded mystery, shared only with those chosen to carry the weight of the cult's power. The rituals are shrouded in secrecy, transforming the initiate into a living embodiment of the tribe's ancient forces, making them part of something far bigger than themselves.

The Distinctive Attire: A Fearsome Presence

Members of the Nganya cult strike fear into the hearts of those who see them, draped in black or red loincloths that scream power and mystery. These loincloths are short, starkly different from the traditional wear of the Bakweri men, and their very presence sends a chill down the spine. Accompanied by headscarves, herbs, and beads, each piece of their attire tells a story of ancient rites

and untold power. In days past, initiates walked barefoot—symbols of their connection to the earth and their fearless nature. Today, though, their ritual attire is often completed with shoes, though the aura of invincibility remains.

The Night Patrol: Fearless Guardians

The Nganya cult thrives in darkness. The “Nganya Ya Woo” patrols the night, with power that can protect the land from destruction. When the Nganya is called, it is to cleanse the land, prepare for harvest, and fend off any threat—visible or invisible. On nights when the cult is active, the community knows to stay indoors, for to disobey the sacred order is to risk the wrath of the cult. Vehicles, bikes, and even people who do not belong are forbidden from moving. Those who defy the law of the Nganya do so at their peril. The cult also holds the terrifying power to summon the spirits of the dead, speaking to them, asking questions, and hearing their answers. It is through this connection with the beyond that the Nganya maintains the peace, offering cryptic advice that often must not be followed, a reminder of the deep, shadowy wisdom they command.

“Linyangi La Nganya”: The Daylight Warriors

The Linyangi La Nganya are the daylight counterparts of the feared Nganya. They do not patrol the night, but their power is no less formidable. These

members perform rituals in broad daylight, paving the way for monarchs to ascend their thrones and invoking the ancestors to guide and protect the community. The Linyangi La Nganya dress in the same fearsome attire, but their purpose is one of celebration and reverence. They honor the ancestors with powerful songs and rituals when a Bakweri achieves something monumental, ensuring that their accomplishments are recognized and protected by the spirits of the past.

Conclusion: Unyielding Guardians of Tradition

The Nganya cult is more than just a society—it's a force of nature. With the power to shape the land, protect the community, and maintain a spiritual connection to the ancestors, the Nganya are the fierce, unyielding guardians of the Bakweri people. Through their rituals, they ensure that the land remains prosperous, the people remain safe, and the balance between the living and the dead is forever upheld. The Nganya cult is not a relic of the past; it is a living, breathing testament to the indomitable strength of tradition, an ever-present force that keeps the Bakweri people grounded, protected, and in touch with the spirit world.

Mola Dr. Ngale Maenye
CEO Hvako Enterprise,

Fontélé

Mystery from the Moungo

Fontélé is one of the most important aspect of the Mongo culture and Tradition it was given to us by our forefathers, it is the symbol of hope peace and Renaissance. So because of its place and importance to the Mongo people it only goes out on the call from the holders of our Tradition and heritage (chiefs).

Each time you will see the fontélé know there is a special message and the start of something new.



MBANGO 2023



FAKO'S LEGACY OF LEARNING:

Bridging Tradition And Innovation

Fako: A Beacon of Knowledge and Opportunity

Fako Division, nestled in the Southwest Region of Cameroon, stands as a vibrant symbol of educational excellence and intellectual vitality. With its rich cultural heritage and commitment to academic achievement, Fako has cultivated a thriving educational landscape, integrating tradition and modernity. From its lush forests and mountainous terrains to its urban hubs like Buea, Limbe and Tiko and Muyuka, the region has emerged as a central hub for intellectual development, contributing significantly to Cameroon's educational growth.

Primary Education: Laying a Robust Foundation

Fako is home to over 350 primary schools distributed across both urban and rural areas, including Buea, Limbe, Tiko, and more remote villages such as Idenau and Wovia. These schools provide a strong foundation in literacy, numeracy, and social skills, preparing thousands of children for their future academic journeys. Despite challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, inadequate teaching materials, and infrastructure deficits—particularly in rural zones—Fako has made remarkable progress in increasing school enrollment, with particular emphasis on girls' education. The region's continued focus on widening access to education ensures a promising educational future for its youth.

Secondary Education: A Diverse Landscape of Learning

The secondary education system in Fako is characterized by over 100 schools offering a broad range of academic and vocational programs. Prominent institutions like the Bilingual Grammar School in Buea, Comprehensive High School in Limbe, and Government High School in Tiko uphold the region's reputation for academic rigor. The bilingual nature of these institutions, offering both English and French curricula, ensures that students are well-prepared for the globalized world. Additionally, newer schools like Mount Cameroon Academy and Victoria International School push the boundaries of educational innovation, providing a forward-thinking approach to learning. Despite challenges posed by political instability and school calendar disruptions, Fako students continue to excel, particularly in mathematics, science, and languages, reflecting their resilience and academic tenacity.

Performance in the 2024 GCE Examinations: A Testament to Resilience
Fako Division demonstrated exceptional academic performance in the 2024 General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations.

The region achieved an impressive 85% pass rate in the Ordinary Level (O-Level) exams and a 70% pass rate in the Advanced Level (A-Level) exams. Urban schools like Buea Government Bilingual High School and Limbe Comprehensive High School consistently posted exceptional results, particularly in mathematics, science, and languages. These achievements reflect the dedication of both students and educators, despite external challenges, and affirm Fako's continued commitment to academic excellence.

Tertiary Education: The University of Buea and Beyond

At the heart of Fako's higher education landscape is the University of Buea (UB), established in 1993. UB, the only English-language public university in Cameroon's Southwest, offers a wide range of programs across fields such as law, business, science, and the arts. Under the leadership of Professor Ngomo Horace Manga, the current Vice Chancellor, UB has strengthened its position as one of Cameroon's premier academic institutions. The Faculty of Science and Faculty of Law are especially renowned for producing leaders and professionals in various sectors.

A recent milestone in Fako's academic landscape has been the inauguration of the University of Buea Higher Teacher's Training College (HTTC). Directed by Professor Lucy Mande Ndip, a distinguished Bakweri-born scholar from Wonya Lyonga in Buea, the HTTC plays a critical role in addressing the shortage of qualified educators in the region. The college offers specialized programs in pedagogy, educational leadership, and teacher training, ensuring that future educators



are equipped to meet the challenges of modern education. Professor Ndip has also contributed to the fight against COVID-19, serving as the Principal Investigator at the Laboratory for Emerging Infectious Diseases at UB, where she spearheaded diagnostic efforts.

UB's legacy is further shaped by the contributions of Professor Dorothy L. Njeuma and Professor Nalova Lyonga, former Vice Chancellors of the university. Both women were born in Fako—Professor Njeuma hailing from Buea and Professor Lyonga from both Limbe and Buea—and are notable figures within the Buea First-Class Chieftdom. Professor Njeuma was the first female Vice Chancellor of UB and played a key role in the establishment and early development of the university, while Professor Lyonga provided

visionary leadership during her tenure. Their leadership has had a lasting impact on the university and continues to inspire new generations of scholars.

In addition to UB, Fako is home to several growing tertiary institutions, including the Mount Cameroon Institute of Science and Technology (MCIST), which provides specialized training in engineering, computer science, and environmental management. The Limbe School of Hospitality and Tourism plays a key role in the region's expanding tourism sector, while the Buea School of Business nurtures the next generation of business leaders.

Fako natives in the diaspora also play an essential role in the region's educational development. We deeply appreciate the invaluable contributions of Fako diaspora groups, such as BECDA, Fako America, BACA S.K, and many others. Their collective efforts, along with the remarkable work of individuals like Professor Julius Esunge, founder of Hope Academy Primary and High School, exemplify the spirit of giving and community support. Through initiatives such as back-to-school programs and scholarship schemes, their material and financial donations have made a significant impact on the educational advancement of Fako's youth. These contributions are deeply valued, and we are grateful for



the continued support that strengthens our educational foundations and helps empower the next generation of leaders. Challenges and the Path Forward: A Vision for the Future

Despite its successes, Fako faces several challenges, most notably the ongoing political instability in the Anglophone regions, which has caused disruptions to the school calendar, teacher shortages, and infrastructural deficits. However, proactive efforts are underway to address these challenges. Online learning

platforms, infrastructure upgrades, and scholarship programs aimed at supporting underprivileged students are some of the initiatives that are helping to pave the way for a brighter future. The establishment of the Higher Teacher's Training College (HTTC) at UB ensures that the region will have a continuous supply of qualified educators, further strengthening Fako's educational foundation.

Looking ahead, Fako remains committed to improving the quality of education at all levels. The region plans to continue investing in teacher training, expanding vocational programs, and enhancing teaching facilities. By focusing on educational innovation and specialized skills development, Fako is positioning itself as a model of educational excellence in Cameroon. As more students pursue higher education, Fako's trajectory promises to contribute significantly to both national and global development, solidifying its place as a beacon of knowledge and opportunity.

Professor Kingsley L. Ngange

*Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Research, Cooperation and Relations with the Business World, University of Buea
Notable of the Buea First-Class Chiefdom*

FAWONE's Role in Advancing Education in Fako: Empowering Future Generations

**IYA FRIDA LIMUNGA TEKE & IYA
NAMESRENCE LYONGA**
*Communication Committee, MBAN-
DO CULTURAL FESTIVAL*

Fako Women N'Edinge (FAWONE), in partnership with various collaborators, has made significant strides in advancing education within the Fako Division. Annually, the association awards over 200 prizes, including cash awards and essential educational resources such as ICT tools, books, and other materials, collectively valued at more than 5 million FCFA. These accolades honor the exceptional academic achievements of both male and female students who have excelled in the General Certificate of Education (GCE), at both Ordinary and Advanced levels, over the past two years.

Founded in 2021, FAWONE is an association of women from all subdivisions of Fako, including those both in Cameroon and the diaspora. The association

led by Iya Dr. Etonde Mbua (Notable of the First-class Chiefdom of Buea), as National president, is committed to fostering peace, promoting social cohesion, and supporting sustainable development throughout Fako, the South West Region, and beyond. FAWONE is particularly focused on empowering the youth of Fako and advancing the position of Fako women in society.

To date, FAWONE has established nine active chapters across the Fako Division—Limbe (1, 2, and 3), Buea, Idenau, Muyuka, Tiko, Muea, and Bonjongo—along with chapters in Douala, Yaoundé, and a diaspora branch in the United States. The association is also



planning to expand its presence into other regions with significant Fako communities, further strengthening its impact on education and community development.

Cultural Sports In Fako Division: A Fusion Of Tradition, Athleticism, And Heritage

Passionate Enthusiasts of Sports

In Fako Division, where the mighty Mount Cameroon casts its shadow, sports are not mere games—they are the heartbeat of a vibrant culture. While football and athletics thrive, it is the traditional sports that pulse with the essence of the region's heritage, blending athleticism with ancestral pride, and weaving bonds among the people.

Traditional Wrestling: The Sport and Cultural Legacy of the Fako People
Traditional wrestling, known as “Wez-ruwa” in Mokpe and “Pala-Pala” in local Pidgin, is not just a sport in Fako; it is a celebration of strength, culture, and unity, woven deeply into the very fabric of the community. With the rhythmic beats of the Njimbi drums reverberating through the air, this ancient tradition has been reborn, thanks to the dedicated efforts of leaders like Mola Njie Ewome and Mola Paul Kalle, who have reignited its flame across the four zones of the Fako Traditional Wrestling Association—Zone A (Buea), Zone B (Limbe), Zone C (Tiko), and Zone D (Muyuka). While Zones A and B have flourished with fierce competition, featuring legends like Robert Mokase and Wose Tonga, as well as rising stars such as Andreas Likafi and Smith Tonga, Zones C and D are still in the process of revival. The sport's heart is also beating stronger for women, as Rebecca Ndolo Muambo and Violette Namondo Ikome blaze a trail for future female wrestlers. From the hills of Wokwai, Wonakanda, and Wowa in Zone A to the coastal villages of Mokunda, Bobende, and Ngeme in Zone B, the Njimbi drums echo in celebration as families, traders, and fans gather to witness the spirited matches, creating a powerful sense of belonging. The hope is that with time, Zones C and D will join the revival, ensuring that wrestling continues to bridge generations and preserve Fako's rich cultural heritage. Every throw, every chant, and every beat of the Njimbi is a testament to Fako's enduring spirit—a sport that is not merely a contest of strength, but a celebration of identity, connection, and unity. With a bright future ahead, Wez-ruwa will continue to inspire, ensuring Fako's proud wrestling tradition thrives for generations to come.

Among the most iconic events is the Mount Cameroon Race of Hope, an annual challenge that calls athletes to race to the summit of the towering peak and



back. Spanning over 40 kilometers, this grueling race is more than a test of physical endurance—it is a celebration of the spirit of Fako. The race brings together local and international competitors, all united by the mountain's symbolism of resilience and strength, and it is a time for the community to cheer on their champions, their pride reflected in every stride. No discussion of the Mt. Cameroon Race of Hope would be complete without paying tribute to one of its most iconic figures—Iya Sarah Liengu Etonge, the unparalleled Queen of the Mountain. Her legacy towers over the race, embodying the spirit of resilience, strength, and courage that defines this legendary event. We honor not only her remarkable achievements but also all the winners and participants who have dared to

take on this thrilling, high-stakes journey to the summit.

The region's coastal communities also embrace the thrill of competition through traditional canoe races. Along the shores of Limbe and Tiko, participants race wooden canoes, honoring their fishing heritage and the bond between the people and the sea. The vibrant energy of these races, filled with spectators and local cheers, is a celebration of Fako's maritime culture, its traditions floating proudly on the waters of the Atlantic. We commend the people of the Mongo area (Tiko Subdivision) for their outstanding victory at the inaugural Mbando Cultural Festival last year, proudly emerging as the champions of this historic event.

In Fako, cultural sports are not just physical contests—they are a living connection to the past, a way of preserving tradition, fostering unity, and instilling pride. From the wrestling mat to the mountain trails and the waters of the coast, these sports are a testament to the enduring spirit of the Fako people—a people whose heritage is as fierce and unyielding as the mountain that stands watch over them.

Mola Ekema Njoku aka Rzango Elephant CEO, ELEPHANT'S INFO & Communication Committee, MBANDO CULTURAL FESTIVAL

IN OUR MEMORIES FOREVER

Late Dr. CN Menyoli

THE MOKONDO MO NJOKU!
A Tribute to late Dr. Charles N. Menyoli

Mirzoli ma rziwa
E Mokondo mo njoku a kpeli
Oh! What a great loss!
The crying sky says it all.

I rza nmenè hvè
a timbi li hwè na Lowè
It was a good fight he fought
So many lives he touched!

A èendè ndi l'arziolè
Wekom'a Lowè
In our hearts engraved
This legend who once lived

Yondo rzuwelele Mokondo mo Njoku
O kule e wolo yango anu
Watch and inspire from above
And sometimes visit like a dove

By Mola Dr. Ngale Maenye D. (15/09/23)
CEO, HVAKO ENTERPRISE



Late Andrew Motanga Monjimba



Monjimba!!
A Tribute to late Andrew Motanga Monjimba

O lini longe o gbe a good job
O endeni wato wango with love
O jo ongeli naa your children
O jo kumene like a mother Hen.

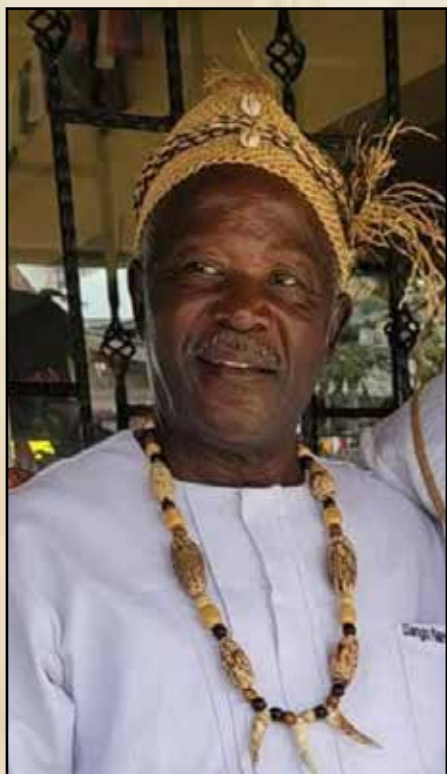
Noma wende to the other world,
Ojo komeya wanga at that other end
Nmelle hwa ma hwe like us,
Nmelle Irzhohve will be like dust

O rza liiya toh moto on this earth
Irzo warze I hweli ndi travelers here
Jaaka ndi laaka to our final rest
Li hwe na Lowe who always hears

Timba! o maanda from where you came
O kule ewolo yangoh on this earth
Yondo rzuwelele mola Monjimba the great!
Lowa lango ao ambele with his Grace!

By Mola Dr. Ngale Maenye D. (15/09/23)
CEO, HVAKO ENTERPRISE

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Mola Kala Njie
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Fako Mbando 2024

Thank you

Heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all Senior Government Officials and Civil Authorities, Traditional Rulers and Religious Leaders and the population at large who attended the Fako Mbando 2024 Cultural Festival. Particular thanks go to those who were able to visit the three venues. Your presence was very encouraging for the Steering Committee.

Many thanks to those who participated in the various group or individual activities and so contributed to the success of the festival and brought smiles, laughter and joy to thousands of people and hope to the youths of Fako that they have a vibrant cultural heritage.

The Organisers of the festival pulled off a successful event under difficult circumstances. Many thanks for the great sacrifice in time and financial resources that they devoted to keep the Fako Mbando Cultural Festival alive.

To the sponsors of this year's Fako Mbando Cultural Festival a very big and warm thank you. Your support was an expression of solidarity with Fako and contributed immensely to the success festival. We look forward to our continued partnership.

The Fako Chiefs and people of Fako who supported the Mbando 2024 Cultural Festival financially and/or materially deserve great applause and encouragement to continue not only their support but to participate actively in the planning of future editions of the Cultural Festival.

Finally, heartfelt gratitude to the many who made contributions for the Fako Multipurpose Cultural Center (FMCC). As we go home, having been enriched by the festival, we should keep in mind the long-term vision and objectives of the FMCC and continue to contribute generously for their realisation.

We hope to meet again next year to celebrate Fako Culture.
Journey mercies to all!

Dr. Namanga Ngongi
Chairman, Fako Mbando Cultural Festival Steering Committee.





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