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The Origin of the Warr Clan, Wimbum Area Council, Donga and Mantung Division West Cameroon.

By
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Fon of Chup

In «Notes on the Polyglot Populations of Nkambe» published in *ABBIA* N° 21 of 1969 reference was made to the difficulty of collecting information on the origin of the Warr prior to their arrival in Mbiribaw (Mbot Farm) and also the real reasons which led to their scattering from Mbiribaw. The tradition collected by Jeffreys from the Village Head of Nsob claimed that the Warr are a part of the Wimbum—the major ethnic group in Donga and Mantung Division—who are said to be a part of the MBUM who formerly occupied the vast Plateau region of the Benoué Division of Northern East Cameroon. This oral tradition narrated by the Fon of Chup after being enlightened by his village elders throws further light on this obscure period of Wimbum history and corroborates the version of Wimbum origin as collected by Jeffreys (*vide supra*). This account is an English version of the original tradition as narrated to me in Pidgin English by the Fon on 14th December 1965. This being a closely guarded customary secret I sought and obtained his verbal consent to publish.

P. C. Mafiamba,
Yaoundé. 11.11.1970

«I the Chief of Chup say that we the Warr came from Kimi from where we left for Ngu and from Ngu we left for Bangowar. We were altogether twenty people in Bangowar. Several people died in Bangowar and only six left Bangowar for Mbiribaw. Some more people died leaving four people who constituted the nucleus of the Mbiribaw settlement.

These four founding fathers were:

- Chup—begot three children: Kungi, Mbissa and Mbah
- Ntumbaw—begot three children: Saa, Sunjaw and Bum
- Sop (Nsob)—begot three children ESU, Kochi (Noni) and Dumbo
- Mbot—begot three children: Njap, Watt and NKAMBE. Tabe-sob in Nso-land is an off-shoot of Nkambe.

They constituted the twelve chiefs of Warr Clan. They saw a pumpkin ('baw') which was growing near a small pond. They came in the form of snakes and emerged as mushrooms near the pond in Mbiribaw. Chup was the first to leave Mbiribaw. He was soon followed by Sop and Ntumbaw. All three went to the places which now bear their names. Mbot, however, remained at Mbiribaw.»

Asked what caused the dispersion of all four of them at Mbiribaw, the Chief replied:

«Mbot and Chup were returning from the pond carrying water in calabashes when Mbot asked Chup why the latter had corked his calabash with «NKINGKENG» (cork of calabash) as himself. I Chup said to him: «you are a small child, remain in this place. Because I am the first (eldest) child I will leave you to enjoy whatever you like. I can do whatever I like without being accused of committing a crime; what has made you a small boy accuse me of breaking the law? Well, I leave the country to you; I leave and go to Chup to find game there. «Sop said.» What have you done to Chup who is your elder? It is better that I go to the big river at Sop to catch fish, for I am second to Chup. You do not pay heed to what Chup says; will you pay heed to mine?» And Ntumbaw said: «Mbot, you are a child; your elders have left, so I will follow them. If I follow them and do not see them I will

settle on any level land that I come across.» («Mbaw» means plain, level land; that is the meaning of Ntumbaw). Binshua said: «I am the last child. The others are princes; I am a servant. I will try to go to a bush (land) where I can live; I have no father or mother! («Shua» means to roam about the bush with no guide to show the way). Bum said: «I am the last child; I am not a chief. I will go and seek my fortune elsewhere to see what God has in store for me». ("N—Bum—nwe" means I have no one to help me—that is what Bum means).

Questioned why the Warr left Kimi and where they were before settling in Kimi, the Fon of Chup replied:

«Warr people emigrated from Kimi because of squabble about women (women palaver). (One) Man said «my wife has gone to fetch water.» Women refused to feed some people. We became angry and left and went to Kimi. Warr people left some other place in Tikar land before they went to Kimi. (The Chief could not remember the name of the place; the squabble appears to have occurred there, before they moved to Kimi). We left Kimi and went to Ngu where we married and increased in number to twenty and then emigrated from Ngu to Bangowar. Bangowar is near Sop.»

P. C. Mafiamba

15/11/70

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