

interdependent economic and social system. While the north depends upon the commercial products from Lomé, the seaport, the south depends upon the agricultural crops of the north. Though great social changes are taking place, traditional values still have a strong hold over the older people because of the isolation of many homesteads in the more remote, rugged mountain slopes. Their fetish religion is one of the strongest integrating forces for the unity of the people as Kabiye.

2. The Myths of Origin

According to a Kabiye legend it is believed that their people came down from *Essoda* (Heaven). The first man and woman descended from *Essoda* and landed at a place called Pissare which is in the mountains near Konfessi. At this place, Kabiye claim, may be seen the footprints of the first man and woman and animals embedded in the rocks. The first man was *Lama*; the first woman *Yadé*. *Yadé* gave birth to a son and a daughter. When their children were old enough to become married, their parents sent them to *Yadé* in the mountains where they started a settlement. Almost every section of the tribe can show places on the rocks where supposedly human beings and animals left their footprints on the rocks in their descent from Heaven (Larson 1964: 6).



Fig. 1 Kabiye jojo (holy man) pointing to the footprint of the first Kabiye man who came to earth from Heaven in the mountains above Yadé.

The Hambukushu origin myth has some similarities. They too believe that the first man and woman of their tribe came from Heaven on a spider web to the Tsodilo Hills in Botswana. Also God (*Nyambi*) with his wife and son came down the spider web and lived for a time in a village like human beings. When *Nyambi's* wife was abused by the people of another village, *Nyambi* decided it was time to leave the people. He, his wife, then later their son climbed the mythical spider web to Heaven. *Nyambi* then cut the web and thenceforth had nothing more to do with mortal men on earth (Larson 1972: 29 f.).

3. The Concept of God

The Kabiye call God *Esso*, and Heaven is *Essoda*. *Esso* is almighty and lives in the sky. He is invisible; he created all things and has eternal life. People who are good can live in *Essoda* when they die. They do not believe in a hell. According to the Kabiye it is only the Christian missionaries who believe in a place called hell. The people believe that *Esso* can help them, but it is no good to pray to *Esso* directly. The people first have to sacrifice to petition the invisible fetish spirits called *sion* to ask *Esso* for assistance and favors (Larson 1964: 109 f.).

The Hambukushu, on the other hand, do not pray to *Nyambi* for he is indifferent to human beings and their needs and troubles. He is not a loving god; he is neither good nor bad. He is invisible and powerful and master of the universe and all things on earth. He too lives in the sky. The Hambukushu believe the good spirits of the people upon a person's death go to live with *Nyambi*. *Shadipinyi*, *Nyambi's* evil messenger of death, takes the spirit to *Nyambi* who decides if a person should live with either *Nyambi* or the evil *Shadipinyi*. If a person was good he can stay in Heaven with *Nyambi* where he can eat good food and drink good beer, work in the shade and live with his family and friends. If a person were evil he must live with *Shadipinyi* where he must work in the hot sun, eat bad food and drink bad beer, and can not live with friends and relatives (Larson 1971: 57).