

Meanings of Names

English translation:

Interviewer: But how do they give children names? What are the things they look at before they give a child a name?

Woman: The Christians?

Interviewer: The Yorubas.

Woman: We Yorubas?

Interviewer: Yes, we Yorubas.

Woman: Ehhhhh... We look at the house before a person names a child.¹

Interviewer: That is another proverb.

Woman: [nods] That is another proverb.

Interviewer: Can you give us an example [meant to ask for an explanation]?

Woman: Ehhn, what happens is that if the child is born in a king's palace, they can name the child *Ọbafẹ́mi*²; they can name the child...

Interviewer: *Adéniké*³.

Woman: They can name the child *Adéniké*.

Interviewer: What of other children? And names such as *Igè* and *Dada*?

Woman: Ehhh... I don't know much about *Igè* and *Dada*.

Interviewer: Is *Igè* the child that uses its legs to...?

Woman: Yes, it is *Igè* that they say comes out [of the womb] with feet first. *Igè* they say comes out [of the womb] feet first.

Interviewer: What of *Dada*?

¹ We look at the circumstances surrounding a child's birth before naming the child.

² The name means "the king loves me."

³ The name means "the crown will take care of you."

Woman: [People named] Dada, their hair is matted [forming dreadlocks] from heaven [from the womb]. Those are the people named Dada. For twins, the child that comes out first is called Táyé. The one who follows is called Kèhìdé. Both of them are twins.

Interviewer: Can you please tell us the meaning of Táyé?

Woman: [It means] he is the first one to come to the world.

Interviewer: He is the first one to taste...

Woman: He is the first one to taste the world before Kèhìdé...

Interviewer: Comes after.

Woman: Comes after.

About CultureTalk: CultureTalk is produced by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages and housed on the LangMedia Website. The project provides students of language and culture with samples of people talking about their lives in the languages they use every day. The participants in CultureTalk interviews and discussions are of many different ages and walks of life. They are free to express themselves as they wish. The ideas and opinions presented here are those of the participants. Inclusion in CultureTalk does not represent endorsement of these ideas or opinions by the Five College Center for the Study of World Languages, Five Colleges, Incorporated, or any of its member institutions: Amherst College, Hampshire College, Mount Holyoke College, Smith College and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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