

Aka Elephant Mask. Bamileke. C. 19th to 20th century C.E. Wood, woven raffia, cloth, and beads

The dance was danced by the members of the Elephant Society (the Kuosi Society)

The mask was worn in a masquerade- the Elephant dance (tso)

Decorated with colored beads

The dance is meant to honor the king and symbolize bringing about social harmony

The leopard and the elephant were symbols of the king's power and his authority

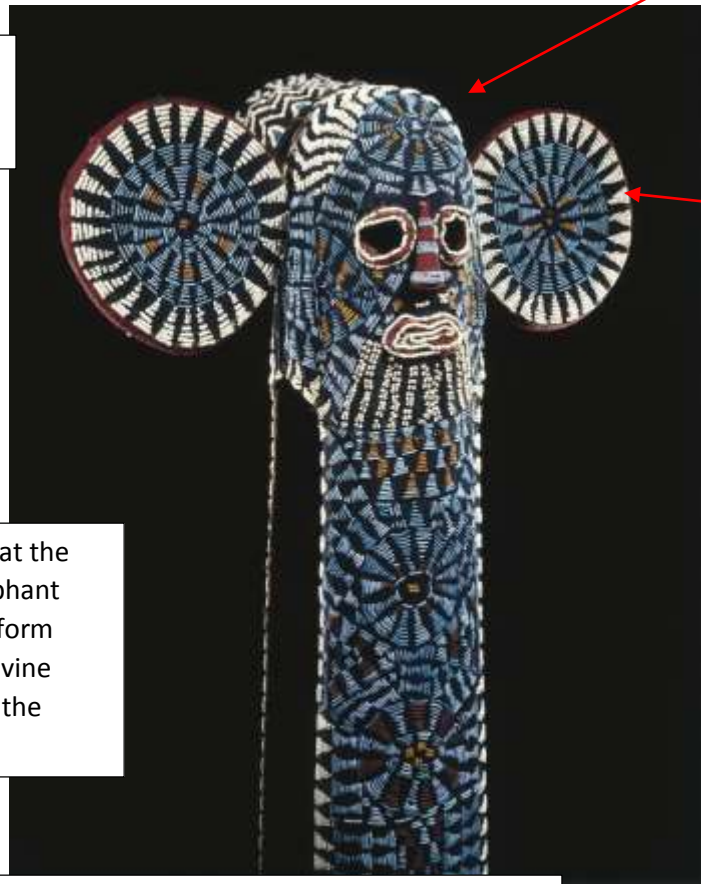
The Bamileke people believed that the king could transform into an elephant and that the leopard could transform into a human (shows the king's divine right to rule from the essence of the powerful animals)

People who wore the costumes and masks during the ritual dance were warriors, officials, title holders, and other people who hold a large amount of power- this is to express the great power of the king and his authority over them

The form is in the shape of isosceles triangles- meant to relate to patterns on the body of a leopard

The mask was worn with a feathered headdress, leopard skin pelts, and a full body costume

The dance was danced barefoot to a drum and gong



Sources:

<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/art-africa/central-africa/cameroon1/v/elephant-mask>

http://www.randafricanart.com/Bamileke_elephant_mask_cowrie_shells.html