

Cultural Practice and Social Initiation in Sub-Saharan Africa: The “Godja” or Flogging in “Barugube” Fulani of Benin

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Received 6 September 2012; accepted 13 November 2012

Abstract

Benin Fulani people are nomadic shepherds who live with their herds in occasional camps located away from areas where villagers are. Although they are people with a non-centralized political system, Benin Fulani have devised an initiation rite with every adolescent and Suka have to undergo before being accepted into the different age groups among the Fulani Waaldeeji. These age classes are organized in an educational institution where prevail equality and mutual trust conducive to assistance to one another as a rule. This initiation rite constitutes one of the means by which the Fulani Barugubé confers gradually the full rights and social duties to the Sukaabe. More than a rite of social integration in which aggression occurs and develops a logical exchange of lashes, the Godja turns to be a practice that helps to maintain and affirm a social identity around cultural references.

Key words: Flagellation or “Godja” rite initiation; Barugubé; Age class or “Waaldeeji”; Social integration

NAKOU Sounon Adam, DAKPO Pascal C., MESSAN Folly, GAGLOZOUN Alphonse, MIDOL Nancy (2012). Cultural Practice and Social Initiation in Sub-Saharan Africa: The “Godja” or Flogging in “Barugube” Fulani of Benin. *Higher Education of Social Science*, 3(3), 50-57. Available from <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/hess/article/view/j.hess.1927024020120303.4039> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.hess.1927024020120303.4039>

INTRODUCTION

The way human body is treated displays the culture in which the given human being lives. By describing a ritual of the Fulani culture, we would like to highlight the anthropological differences which should be taken into account in the process of flagellation practice. So there is no relationship between flagellation, a mortification system among Christians and Fulani teenager flogging in Borgou area, and administration division in the northern part of the Republic of Benin. For these reasons, we deal with Fulani ritual which enhances the physical courage which might be associated with a sporty character but which actually goes beyond a simple manifestation of culture and tradition.

It is difficult to accept the flogging practice and to imagine its importance in the Fulani society when one doesn't belong to that Fulani community, and above all, when one projects one's own image into the Fulani culture. However, this practice is a rite body which cannot be separated from the Fulani culture and which each adolescent should undergo to ensure his social integration. Its moral and physical aspects of suffering helps to prepare young people to face and brave daily life difficulties and predisposes them to respect the Fulani tradition and to promote and safeguard relationships and alliances between the different social units.

It seems that in the society under consideration, physical and verbal violence is linked to a conception according to which young body should be tried out with the view of strengthening it physically and mentally in order to introduce this strength into its subconscious.

Contrarily to the belief held by foreigners to the Fulani society, the “Godja” cannot be regarded as groups’ hostilities related to competition for gaining goods or women. Rather, the “Godja” provides an opportunity for the various social units which are usually distant from one another as far as geographical locality is concerned to get closer for a moment in order to consolidate and strengthen the social ties which link them together. The objective of this study is twofold: First we would like to show that through bodily practices, not only human body can be given full attention but also can be given treatment for aggressive educational goals; Second we would like to carry out this study to understand the complexity of the flogging test and its social implications.

In order to collect reliable and trustful data, we have used a research methodology based on field observation related to flogging sessions organized in several areas in the administrative division of Alibori in the Northern part Benin republic. The field observation is coupled with a cross-analysis of oral evidence taken from an dozen of resource people who are from Fulani origin with a long stand of “Godja” practice. In addition to all these data, we have obtained the contribution of some members of the executive board of subcommittee on national language “Fulfulde” (Fulani), and this contribution has enabled us to have access to some theoretical data related to the topic under consideration.

PRESENTING THE FULANI PEOPLE

The Fulani: Where they from? And who are they?

They are many publications which have dealt with the origins of the Fulani, their way of life, ethnicity, language, but most of those publications are approximate or wrong in their developments. Ethnologists, historians and linguists copying down the stories of the explorers have developed the most diverse stories.

For Diallo (1972), these authors have attributed to the Fulani people a certain non-imaginable kinship and wanted to regard them as Malays, Pelasgians, Jew, Hykos etc. Lhote (1951) cited by Diallo (1972, p. 122) had earlier noted “... there are very few people on earth who have been honored as many fictitious relatives ... and unexpected”. Even if unanimity is not made about their origin and their migration routes, we can at least say that “belong to the Fulani diaspora Foulbe scattered from Senegal to Chad and the Sahel edge of the dense forest following the jihad of Usman Dan Fodio and El-Hadji Omar” (Nakou, 1990, p. 51). Even if we do not know the exact number through their zone of occupation, such as Mauritania and North Dahomey (now Benin) where they are numerous to

some extent, “anywhere in West Africa, the Fulani people constitute a minority people who are of a little value in the mind of other communities” (Diallo, p. 128).

Shepherds pre-eminently, the Fulani live in temporary camps in the bush with their cattle away from the villages. In the dry seasons, the transhume searching for pasture-ground around watering points along rivers and streams. When the rainy season is back, they come back to the camp they have quitted. The temporary absence of the shepherds enables them to escape from the clear-cut checking of the livestock by the owners who have entrusted them with their cattle. This absence also enables to escape from the checking of the family cattle by the family head. Transhumance can then be regarded as the first step in the process of the liberation from one’s father’s authority and as a trial period for young people to learn how to take responsibility and how to make decision alone. In other respects, transhumance acts as a social regulator in the sense that a geographical separation may temporarily help to alleviate some existing social conflicts. “Generally Muslim, the Fulani people are proud in owning many herds, which is a sign of wealth prestige rather than an actual source of income” (Nakou, 1990, p. 51). As goes a Fulani saying, “A Fulani without an ox is not a Fulani”. This means that without owning that ox, he loses his Fulani dignity.

Despite their high dispersion today, the Fulani people have maintained a common language: “Fulfulde” and a philosophy: “Pulaki” which is the foundation of the Fulani ethics, based on the cult of honor and dignity. These values are taught to the children from their childhood as positive and essential things to possess in society. The goals of this ethical teaching are to:

- Learn how to live: this to teach from early childhood, loyalty in relationship with one’s kinship, friendship, alliance, and respect for the elderly as well as for senior people.

- Learn how to have self-control (Munyalii) among the Fulani Bargu, i.e., to know how to control one’s impulses to avoid wrong doing.

- Make the Fulani teenager acquire a sense of honor, because there is nothing more serious for a Fulani Bargube to be told “semtii” that is to say, “you have failed to maintain your honor”.

- To teach common sense: Restraint in front of people and events.

Controlling all these moral values will help to overcome fear because true courage among Fulani people is to agree first, to give lashes during a test of flogging, and second, not to be afraid of receiving some in return. This is the real meaning of the term “mugno” which designates bold, aggressive and courageous people as opposed to coward, timid and fearful “kulol” attributed to cowardly people generally speaking. During their childhood young boys are trained to become shepherds. As for young girls, they are raised and educated to help

or to take the place of their mothers in the household when these mothers are away in the surrounding villages bartering trading for or selling milk.

In their adolescent period, young boys and girls are admitted in the "Sukaabe". There is no formal age to become a "Suka". One becomes "Suka" as soon as one does not feel any longer the pleasure to drive the cattle to graze and one feels a real interest in participating in dances organized by night around the camp on the occasions of baptisms and wedding and especially when one is concerned with caring one's hear, decorating one's body and taking care of one's charm. The fact of beautifying the body with the Fulany geometric tattoos is not only the indicator of gender and social hierarchy but also an erotic and relation satisfaction. This narcissistic investment and competitive body reveals a seductive power that will also be appreciated during flogging tests.

If before reaching the status of women, girls "Sukaabé" should be excised, flogging tests is what every adolescent should undergo before his integration into the curriculum of "Waaldeji" or age. These events pull together the lineages including hundreds of families scattered in the bush and who recognize themselves from a common ancestor. The Fulani live very closed in their own community in the sense that they practice endogamous system and develop a system which distrusts the other social groups. However, conflicts or rivalry can lead them to segmentation. These segmentations will become in term lineage of their own.

Despite this highly original way of life, the Fulani live in a perfect harmony with the other social groups and the other sedentary farmers with whom they maintain multiple relationships despite some misunderstandings as far as the management of the territorial space is concerned. This management becomes increasingly difficult because of the inexorable expansion of villages and farms as a result of the population explosion.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The functioning of African societies has been addressed by many sociologists and anthropologists in different ways according to their concerns. For Ki-Zerbo, cited by Erny (1972, p. 85) "the Negro-African society is essentially initiative society of age group, of preparations and of integrations of one generation after another one."

Erny (1972) abounds in the same direction by being more explicit and by noticing that the African society is organized in such a way that at each age of growth, corresponds a special status which clearly defined where transitions are marked off by rituals and where the principles of seniority determine to some significant extent, the organization of the communities or collectivities. This justifies the system of age groups with some times rigid rules in which individuals of the same age group enjoy a recognized place and jointly exercise

some functions or animate more or less tough institutions.

Within age groups organized in true educational institutions, the child meets an environment different from that of his own where being aware of social life can be done far away from too closed affection belonging and dependence as well. Erny (1972) noted that in the age groups, there is a spirit of equality and commitment resulting in mutual trust and the obligation to assist one another. In the same trends, Copans (1996) was interested in the ways of establishing the age groups. He then realize that the systems of age groups are specific to societies with no centralized political system like what we have among the Fulani people in the northern part of Benin in which is the goal or the aim of this study or research work. For Coplans, two modes of constitution characterized the age groups:

i. A mode of initiation or linear mode which enables the setting up of an age including only those who have participated in the same cycle of initiation. In this case, the number of promotions is not limited so are not limited the names attached to them.

ii. A mode known generational (cyclic) where the actual age is that of the generations. In this case, the individual belongs to an age group from this birth and he moves from his level to another within the given age group. Names which are given to those age classes are fourteen (see Figure 1).

To have access to the age groups, the individual must undergo some initiation rites. It was during these rituals that the initiates undergo some bullying characterized, according to Thomas (1982) by penal servitude, flogging, choking, burns, bites, fasting, strenuous physical exercise, lack of sleep, cold, multiple humiliations, etc. to be suffered with resignation and joy for beginners to make them pay clearly for happy and carefree youth and their families within the village. It is for those reasons that Erny (1972) emphasizes that the initiate must be tested, examined to a complete update knowledge, skills and behavior.

Quenum (1998), while speaking of traditional education in Fon, Goun, Yoruba, and Bariba society in Benin Republic, reports that everything is designed to shape the individual in such a way that he should acquire a determined and expected behaviors. Each provision is marked by prohibitions and taboos of any kind which must be absolutely respected; otherwise you must be submitted penalties or reprisals. Assaba (2000), who has studied the Yuruba society in Benin Republic, realize that the pyramid age is structured bottom-up of age groups or simply of social groups. Cultural ties can, during individual's cults, enable the individual to discover himself as a sacred being; since in the educational life of this social group, people learn to know about the visible and invisible aspect of man which enables man to put his actions into a coherent deed conducive to the group solidarity.

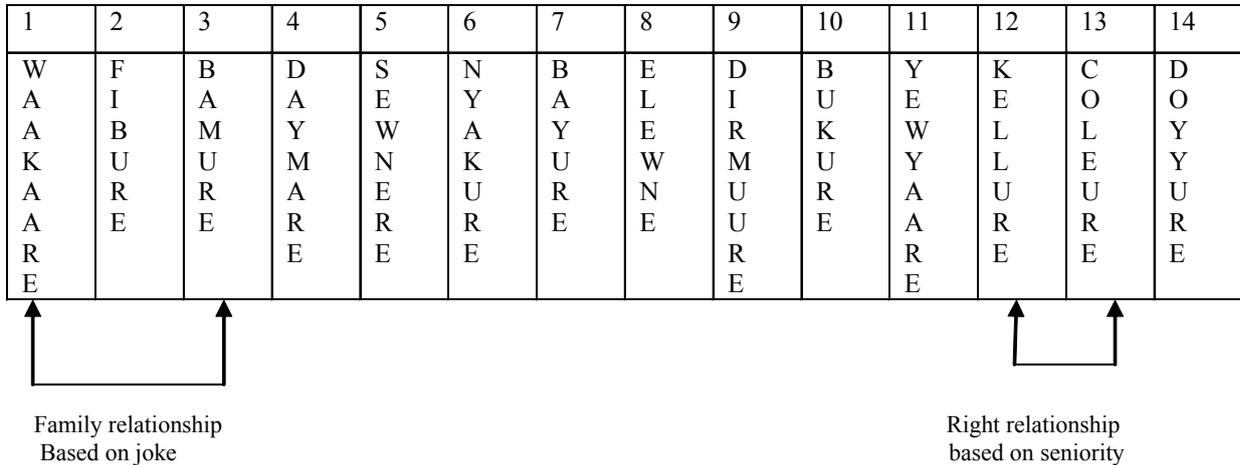


Figure 1
Age Group Range Among The Fulani People

Source: Seminar about the constitution of the Sub-committee of Fulfulde language in Kandi, 20th to 27th of December 1987

Note: A perpetual renewal promotion is noticed here, keeping stable names which stand for them. The plural of nouns of classes is obtained by adding “be” to the end. BAMURE: plural is BAMUREBE.

THE “GODJA” AN INDOSSIABLE PART OF THE FULANI CULTURE

The origin of flogging is not clearly set. Research carried out up today does not indicate the exact origin of the practice which should be common to all Fulani people in Benin Republic. In the frame of its many different variations, the same phenomenon is to be noticed when refer to some other countries in the sub-region like Niger, Nigeria, Burkina Faso where the given practice is known as “Soro”. However, it is useful to refer to some versions related to two young men who, feeling somewhat in trouble, began to give lashes to themselves once they were back to pasture. When asked why, they answered that they were measuring their strength and endurance. Others versions state that “multiple functions of catharsis, of religious worship, sacred rites designed to ward of death, prosperity, derogations to get through the rain, water, source of the life an especially to bring to groups the cohesion of the team spirit necessary for their survival” (Chamel, 1986, p. 25). In short, it is a kind of social cleansing in order to save the Fulani people and their cattle from epidemics and natural desasters.

The organization of the tests of flogging is generally determined by the “dottibe” (4) and especially by the wealthy when there is a happy event such as baptism and wedding, for example. Once the organization is approved, a member from an agreed age group plants a ship in the place where the tests will take place. This act is already a challenge to all the members of the age-group, a challenge which should be taken up by one of its opponent partners. From that moment, the members of each of the fourteen age range go to the bush, searching for roots, bark, leaves, and magical plants. Some of this

stuff will be used for drinking; other will be used for bathing. Still other will be used to make talismans and amulets for good or power performance of an individual in the curse of flagellation and the result is attributed to the effectiveness of the supernatural powers of the given plants. The use of the marginal forces from wild plants aims also to support actual pain to stop bleeding internally and externally. Their virtues are also to make powerless the arms of the one who is flogging his opponent and to put out of reach the opponent attack. This justifies why some people transform whips cut from the tree named “Dingali” (8) attributing to them an occult and magical power. All this urged Thomas (1988, p. 94) to state that “Africa is the traditional privileged land which best expressed the strangest supernatural power man can have over himself and over nature”. If all this care is taken prior to flogging tests, it is because in the collective Fulani conscientiousness, the physical force on the one hand and experience in the other hand are not sufficient enough to cool down the anxiety and concern within those who are undergoing flogging tests. Then the balance of power is established between the actors, a balance which is not only established by the potential and real use of physical force and open; but it is also related to the use of the force of magical powers. All these forces are canalized and regulated by rules accepted and respected by everybody in the community and by influential men who see to the regular exchanges of lashes. The “Godja” is then a preferred mode of relationship between the Fulani and especially between man and himself and between the elements of nature.

Like any practice, flogging obeys a set of rules (WoDaaBe) the transgression of which is penalized by the community. So, the members of the same family,

should not compete, since too close relationship can be conducive to being cautious in exchanging lashes without respecting the standard which is required and without paying attention to the physical resources; Only members of the same group are allowed to compete; During the test, competitors should have their busts naked, their chests clearly shown and their hands above their heads so as not to prevent the opponent’s action; Each competitor should receive as many lashes he has given, unless he is early injured; It is highly forbidden to give lashes on any part of the body other than the bust; It is also forbidden to move one’s feet, to pout, get wet, scream or run away under the influence of the pain, in order to avoid being incapable of proceeding on the competition; The winner is not only the one whose power stroke causes acute wheezing and undermines the opponent, but the one who, while receiving lashes, remains, undeterred and continues to challenge his opponent. In other respect, the Fulani society does not regard flogging as a test of competitive interaction.

The primary role of this rite is not the victory of one person over another one in an assertion of supremacy, but adherence to a participatory ritual that helps to build character to the courage of the youth.

The role of the judges (Gossobè) to encourage the one who are won by fear and to contain the ardour of those who are to impetuous. The rituals preceding the trials of flogging console and reassure the stakeholders. Indeed, before going to the battle field, competitors drink together millet porridge diluted with water in a big gourd. It is that last drink that symbolizes the covenant of blood and friendship between the members of the same age group. From his retreating place to the place of the events, each fighter was accompanied by a group of supporters (walobè) including members of his lineage, friends and sympathizers in an atmosphere of song and dance. A series of acrobatic and physical exercises are skillfully performed with the view of getting warm for the competition and intimidating, threatening and challenging one’s opponent. The competition takes place within a circle with artificial boundaries delimited by the presence of spectators from every social class and any social category. The flagellators have their heads shaved on each side which displays the sign of their social status. They wear necklaces around their necks, earrings which dangle down their shoulders, talismans attached to their elbows and their belts. To this, we have to add a set of colorful cloths tied around their hips and which get down to their triceps surae and some bells attached to their ankles; It is in a complex atmosphere full of anxiety and serenity that competitors display their faces wet with perspiration and their bodies loaded with tattoos designed in geometric shapes, while waiting eagerly for their turn to perform their rites. The fights are permitted only when the possibility of victory or defeat of the competitors at hand is balanced up, taking into account their physical fitness and previous experiences.

For the “Sukaabe” who are still inexperienced, members of their families can tell them the right position or standing position they can adopt to receive the lashes and how to give some as well. Usually the hosts hit first their visitors. Several groups in pairs belonging to different age groups can fight simultaneously according to the case and circumstances.

To start the fight, a competitor places himself in the middle of the circle with his hand above his head, his legs slightly apart to challenge his opponent. The opponent moves forward, backward, approaches, retreats, gets away, keeps looking for where he can hit his rival and tries to feel his victim’s chest to be aware of his degree of fear and anxiety. After this pretence, the lash has striped like the zebra his opponent’s chest in a brutal and sharp way. This opponent stands up, well established on his feet, receiving one, two, three strokes of lashes according to the age group. His family members who are attending this show, instead of complaining of their representative’s suffering, rather threaten him with curse when he does not resist to his opponent’s strokes. He must remain cool and calm and must make courageous gestures in order to avoid displaying any sign of pain or suffering, taking thereby an oath that he can resist as long as possible. If the sharpness of the strokes sometimes obliges some individuals who are not psychologically prepared for the competition, to get wet or to give up, others (and they are numerous) want to die rather than giving up in front of the public. Beart (1960, p. 39) in the same trend, while writing about endogenous games states “the spiritual sphere where the ceremony took place is that of honor, ostentation, boasting and challenge. A world of chivalrous pride and chimerical heroism where names and blazons are very important and where a set of ancestors are considered”.

This explains why after each stroke of lash, the troubadour of each lineage remembers the bravery of their ancestors who, with dignity, participated in the tests of flogging. The whole spectacle related to the battle is enhanced by a complex set of rhetoric in which opponents turn each other in derision. As Senghor advocated and quoted by Thomas (1988, p. 100). “Parole and verb are par excellence, the expression of force, of being in its full sense, ... for the one who exists, parole owns a magic power, realizes the maw of participation and creates the called up person with its intrinsic virtue”. All this oratorical jousts respect the pre-established standards and enables opponents to attack each other verbally and to avoid the deterioration of relationships.

After flogging, the opponents come together to dance and to feel some pride for having their chests striped like the zebra. The compelling nature of the “godja” turns it in a true school of life where rhetorical talents, gift of reply, strength of the will and of the character play a role in the process of flogging as far as physical force is concerned. Owing to the physical and moral suffering the “godja” inflicts on young people “sukaaBe”, it should create

hatred among the opponents, but instead, he creates and consolidates alliance relations and friendship among the members of the same age group. The exchange of blows and whatever may be their level of violence and verbal joust that accompany them are essentially symbolic. It is a ritual violence which is settled down as it is approved and submitted to a regulation. But that violence belongs also to a physical order, and even if it is in the regulation, the strokes of lashes received during a test of flogging hurt and sometimes hurt very badly. Anyway, even symbolically, it is difficult to accept to be hit. The value set to aggressiveness and to physical violence coupled with verbal violence which can be noticed among the Fulani with the view focused on their cultural traits, contradicts the values of indigenous societies where habit admits confrontation only in case of conflicts.

Anyway, confrontation or not confrontation, "mastering pains is one the most important moral values in African traditional cultures. People can, above all, be aware of it at the moment of initiations and of diverse rites that include sexual mutilations: under pain of shame that may risk to become a lifelong one, the individual should not express his feeling even when his suffering is on top. In other respects, children and young people are trained and shaped to get such a stoical attitude" (Erny, 1972, p. 114).

The existence of the "Godja" is linked to the absence of monopoly system where prevails violence in the Fulani society. Indeed in that Fulani environment, the "Waaldeedji" are usually the real instances of coercion. The status of nomadic herder is so that Fulani have no autonomous instance of justice, no permanent military disposition or troops. All these institutions are managed for them by the other neighboring peoples. The "Sudubaba" which is a kind of justice done by the community after a fault or mistake has been made, and which characterizes the fact of putting the culprit or sending the culprit to Coventry or requiring a fixed fine from the culprit, is not sufficient to fully and completely settle down social conflict and get away from the young people's aggressiveness. The "godja" appears as the only way to the acquisition of know-how and to the learning of rights and duties among the Fulani. In addition to its ritual and social integration, that practiced is synonymous of an intense social life which unites for some time, the Fulani lineages and which opposes the members of the different age groups, facilitating thereby or generating thereby the impulse to neutralize the tendency of these shepherds to enjoy their isolation on a geographical area.

Finally, these tests of flogging enable opponents and people to renew the relationship which exists between different social units and to promote and generate opportunities for young people to meet.

SEDUCTION ON THE OCCASION OF THE TESTS OF FLOGGING

During the tests of "Godja", women and young girls compete in hairstyles, makeup jewelry and tattoos. For the occasion, they dye their hands and feet with henna and they chew kolanut which they keep between their lips and which serves as lipsalve. All these precautions are taken in order to seduce and to be wooed.

That embellishment of the body makes people think that the "Godja" is comparable to the rivalries of some social groups geared to the obtainment of material things or women. However, the problem does not arise in terms of competition for women. If not, how can people understand that married men devote to that practice? Even the polygamous regime does not justify the participation in that event or trial.

In a love speech, it is often a single detail which fascinates people, a coiffure, a set of jewellery, a bracelet, etc. It is the kind of love at first sight allowed to every age during the test of flagellation, a sort of free love in which no one necessarily looks for sensual intercourse. Everything is limited to the act of touching one's body, to flirting like, such as do you love me? I love you, phrases which are repeated a thousand times in many ways.

On the evening of the test of flogging, people can notice movements among themselves, love affairs which are held from one corner to another as if they were going to catch up the lost time generated by transhumance and geographical isolation. During that relationship between male and female adolescents or teenagers, money has never been the main focus of their negotiations otherwise the female teenager can be regarded as a whore. What matters is to obtain the favour of one's female companion, nothing more. That period appears as an indicator of the assessment of the degree of discretion and of self-control of girls and boys. The practice of the game of seduction and self-control specific to women is carried out to manipulate men's desire by Fulani girls in a careful way.

Anyway, whatever the mode of knowing the other person, the "Godja" is and remains one of the favorable opportunities to meet eventual partner and vice versa. In principle, the preferential marriage is the one with the cross-cousin. This type of alliance enables people to keep in their families the dowry which mainly includes cows and bulls. During the flogging tests, women through here presence encourages opponents to display strength and courage, since showing strength and courage during the "Godja" is not only a matter of honour for one family but it is also, as stated by Callède (1988, p.17) while describing the tournaments which took place in the middle Age "... a great way to attract a woman, the greatest

perhaps. Woman is a source of inspiration to achieve chivalrous performances". In that ritual related to the Fulani from Benin, women and men participate together in the value of the group or clan.

This explains why the Fulani believe that without women's presence, flogging tests would have no interests and flogging tests might disappear very quickly.

RETIREMENT

If for some people it is a fire baptism, for others, flogging tests have become a routine. But still for others, it is the end of a rite to which they have devoted for several years. These people are about to give up that rite because they have reached the upper age limit.

They will then have access to the class of the "Karaakube", the class of the wise people. But before that, they have to perform a ceremony which puts an end to their participation in the tests of "Godja" as actors.

After being thirty five, forty years old, the members of the same age group prepare their withdrawal from every flogging test. They shave their hair "Djokoré" and they get rid of their accoutrements they have used during their various previous tests of flogging. For one week, they have on their heads their fathers' old hats and they lead their cattle to grazing-land in order to avoid being noticed. It is only after that ritual that they are allowed to put on their heads a red tarboosh, a sign of their belonging to the group of the (dottibe), that is to say, the elderly people: an expression both of the regained wisdom and of the victory of life over death. From now on, they can be chosen to take their young brothers to the "Godja" tests during the process of which they will be selected either as judges (gossobè) or as resource persons (dottibe) because for the Fulani and also for many other communities, piling up ages is often synonymous of acquiring experience and wisdom. It is what Copans (1996) asserted when the states that age is an obvious "anthropology". Copan also insisted on the role elderly and old people can play in the symbolic representation of authority in the storage of tradition among people belonging to the same lineage, on the preservation of order and identity. Through the entry of new age groups and stepping down of the old ones, the "Godja" contributes to the renewal of the Fulani society potential.

CONCLUSION

This study of flagellation among the Fulani known as "Barugube" is just an attempt which does not claim to be exhaustive as we are far away from having covered all the aspects that rite demands and from all the forms of symbolism attached to it. However, the cross-analysis of oral and written data collected from several sources can enable people to some of the features related to the

Fulani lifestyle, their value scale, their virtues, and to know their survival techniques, their medical and magical practices which belong to them. By changing the physical and verbal violence and by curbing instincts of revenge through the blood pact that binds up the members of the same age, flogging appears to be an initiation practice designed for keeping cohesion in society. It is the criterion attached to maturity among the Fulani "Barugube" and the "Sukabe" criterion which leads progressively the "Barugube" to provide full rights and social duties with the "Sukabe". The values which are emphasized during that initiation are strength, skillfulness, endurance, courage, and generosity, qualities needed by the Fulani "Barugube" to survive in a sociocultural environment which is very hard and hostile and which compels them to try to defy death purposely during the flogging tests in a challenging psychological situation.

NOTES

1. Suka (plural sukabe): adolescent whose age varies between 16 and 20 who has no concern that her braids and girls.
2. Waaldeeji: age groups among the Fulani.
3. Barugubé: the word Bargu is the place name by which Fulani neighbors designate the geographical and cultural spread between the 9th and 12th latitude. It is bounded on the east by the right bank of the Niger River 4 ° 25'E, west by Togo-Atakora Mountains in 1 ° 30'E. Fulani diaspora living in this geographical area is called Barugube.
4. Godja: initiation rite among the Fulani, which consists of flogging in physical character of endurance and courage.
5. Pulaku is a code of good conduct different from traditional Islam. It's a way of life, which seemly, decent and polite (common sense, self-control and reserve).
6. The partners here are the young of the same age who are in league against those of another age lower.
7. They are rivals when it comes to compete for access to the upper age or retire.
8. Dingali: small tree with strong branches short, terminated by ovoid fruits with edible leaves. Small branches are used to rub the teeth (*gardenia ternifolia*).
9. Elderly Fulani whose age varies between 50 years and over. The singular "dottibé" is "dottidjo"

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