

## Sub-Saharan African Veterinary Health Recipes and Peace Traditions in Dialog with the Western Countries

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### THE DIALOG OF THE CULTURES

Something is lacking in the world equilibrium, in the dialogue of the cultures. Africa and the West have and have had many disproportionate encounters. The first one was slavery. The western responsibility has been recognized but the debt is too heavy to be paid in monetary terms. According to President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal, the logic of such a payment is like an abuse: "I would feel sworn at if I was asked how much I want to forget slavery" (Robert, 2004, p.82). The second one was the colonisation which was an attempt to build something on what was rated as being nothing. The logic of "tabula rasa" was the key, the starting point. The traditions, the indigenous knowledge, the local religions and world visions, ... were taken and considered as an impediment to hook the wagon of modernity.

But as all of us know that Africa is facing the opportunities and the risks of globalisation and the new international economic order. The West has never been so powerful: economy, science, know-how; the gap between the South and the North is widening. At the same time, the West has never been so fragile: climate, biodiversity, energy sources are endangered. Terrible inequity or inequality between people has fostered deviant behaviours; religions are used as means to oppose people; modern societies are frequently described as unbound, people being in a loss of ties or affiliations.

On the other hand, it is quite strange that the same words are utilized to characterize some behaviours. In Bukavu as well in Bujumbura or in Cureghem (an area from Anderlecht, Brussels), young people are described as being uprooted and in a loss of references or bearings.

P. Ricoeur, the French philosopher (died in 2005) devoted his last book to "recognition" (la reconnaissance). Two "mother" ideas, pertinent for our subject, are embedded in the word "reconnaître" or "recognize":

- to grasp (an object) by the spirit, by thought; to distinguish, to identify; to know or to experience by memory, judgment or action.

- to accept, to hold for true (P. Ricoeur, 2004, p.30).

He opposes Descartes and Kant. For both of them, "reconnaître" (to recognize) is to identify, to grasp by thought a unity of sense, of signification. For Descartes, the emphasis is put on "distinguish" or "separate". For Kant, to identify is to "link together". In the face of the mystery of the great cultures, a work of identification, critical elucidation and enumeration is necessary. The second step would be to track the unity hidden behind the complexity. In medicine for example, an attempt to sum up the rich catalogue of traditional recipes must be supplemented by an effort to track the fundamental coherence or unity. This way, we rejoin the second meaning of the word "recognize", i.e. to accept, to hold for true.

Summarizing, we should stress that indigenous knowledge must be recognized as having a right to exist and being the driving force for development. Development is, according to J. Ki-Zerbo, the historian of Black Africa, it is the "the passage from oneself to oneself but at an upper level" (J. Ki-Zerbo, 1994, p.33). On the other hand, the West has never done anything but to offer the products of its own development and not the process of development (Singleton, 1998, p.101).

Another lesson should be drawn from this encounter. In a well balanced meeting, Westerners have many things to learn from Africa and not only in the domain of arts: masks, painting, music, dancing. Africa may help the West (Robert, 2004).

### KNOWLEDGE

Knowledge has many definitions most often presented by opposition of terms. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) contrast with Western Knowledge Systems (WKS); that is implicit knowledge versus explicit knowledge.

Haverkort et al. (1999) contend that the actual knowledge of people is three-fold:

- classical knowledge (derived from the great cultural expressions: Aristotle, Incas, ...);
- traditional knowledge transmitted orally from generation to generation and indigenous knowledge related to a specific environment;

- external knowledge brought by education, mass-media, churches, ...

Another interesting approach is made by S.A. Marglin and F. Apffel-Marglin in their book "Decolonizing knowledge. From development to dialogue" (1996). They have recourse to two Greek words: "techne" and "episteme". Each of these words gives the way to a series of contentions which are of interest. They are summarized in Table 1 together with contributions of Grenier (1998). J. Ki-Zerbo refers to "savoirs, savoir-faire, savoir être" which could be imperfectly translated as : "the knowledge, the know-how (to do, to be)".

There are certainly many overlaps between these definitions. Each of them conveys or unveils a part of a complex reality. But it seems that what they say is enshrined or imbedded in what Haverkort (1999) calls a cosmo-vision. It is the way by which "a certain population perceives the world and cosmos". The word "culture" would also be appropriate to define the "ever-changing" place of man in nature and the great questions of life and death.

### HEALTH

Health is regarded quite differently by the various cultures. Let us recall the classical definition given by the WHO. This definition has not been amended since 1949. "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or

infirmity". The conference of Alma-Ata put the stress on the ties between the health and the life conditions of the populations. When it was founded in 1946, WHO claimed "the right of every person to health". What would be the definition of health according to the African cosmovision? I am not entitled to give such a definition but the foundations of African thought on health may be approached by some of its proverbs, e.g. in the Batetela proverbs of On'Okundji (1999, pp. 92-95):

- "Money is a sorcerer". In traditional Black African society, a remedy is never paid. The Nganga (traditional healer) is "honoured" in view of strengthening the efficacy of his remedies.
- "When there is a sick person in the house, the sick person is overlooked but the house is looked at more closely". The health is the result of the well-being of the person with his environment (the relatives, the gods, the ancestors, the sorcerers).
- "If you become a rich person, you could be found guilty of many failings". For the African society, you can't put a price on the peaceful and harmonious life with others.
- Microbes cannot kill the black man but the sorcerer can.<sup>1</sup>
- In Ouagadougou in 1993, with PRELUDE international, a conference has been convened on traditional veterinary remedies in French speaking Africa. We started from the point of view that Africa was not a

**Table 1: Episteme versus techne (\*)**

<i>Episteme</i>	<i>Techne</i>
Experts	Farmers in different agricultural systems
Agro-business	Agri-culture
Knowledge is analytic; it breaks down, decomposes, is reproducible	Techne is indecomposable, synthetic
Claims to universality	No such claim, locally embedded
Community of experts makes them superior	Community of shoemakers, farmers,...
Non contextual (global farm, global market)	Contextual (each farm is a laboratory; local markets)
Sometimes cerebral	Practical. One knows with one's hands and eyes and heart as well as with one's head
Acquired by formal schooling, books,...	Transmitted from person to person, parent – child, master – apprentice, acquired by osmose
Logic predominates (laws, hypotheses)	Intuition is most important (spiritual, moral)
Peace makers (expert) international	Peace consolidation rooted in local practices and knowledge
"Savants" (scholars or scientists)	"Sachants" (Bukavu, RDC) (difficult to translate: those who know)
Culturally imposed Technological imperatives	Culturally embedded Wisdom, principle of precaution
Efficacy : fast	Efficacy : slow
Data generated by specialists	Data generated by users

\*Mostly from Marglin (1996) and Grenier (1998). With some adaptations.

technological vacuum. The symposium was introduced by J. Ki-Zerbo. He regretted the bipolarisation between the heavy programmes with technological purpose and the scarcity of programmes based on indigenous knowledge. Methodology to enrich traditional medicine was aimed to fulfil 3 objectives (Ansary and Kasonia, 1994):

- Identification: a collection of recipes. The contributions of eleven countries were reported at that occasion.
- Verification (but at that time, P. Calame of the "Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le progrès de l'homme 'FPH' " put the question : "in name of which truth?" or of "which Weltanschauung"? However, two methods were tackled, namely, the comparison (are they coherent?) and the pharmacological tests.
- Promotion and development. The four "A" of Anyinam(1987) were put forward: availability, acceptability, accessibility, adaptability.
- Baerts and Lehmann presented at the conference the results of an ethnobotanical survey conducted with traditional healers of Burundi. A basic question was put forward. Do most of the traditional practioners use the same plant to alleviate a well defined symptom ?

A great number of plants were usually given as being able to produce such or such effect. And for the authors, the problem is: " *Which frequency of utilisation is indicative of a tradition*"? Are there some plants mostly used for such and such well defined usage?

The solution is derived from a statistical method proposed by the authors (Baerts and Lehmann,1994). The results show a divide between two extremes: either there are no therapeutic traditions in Burundi (*i.e.* the healers use any plant for any disease) or on the contrary, most traditional practioners use the same treatments to treat the same illnesses.

Currently, the pioneering work of Baerts and Lehmann has been expanded and a "PRELUDE traditional plants data base" is stored in METAFRO which is a catalogue of data sets and data sources related to Central Africa (Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, Belgium). At present, the data bank contains more than 12 500 records in traditional veterinary and human medicine in Sub-Saharan Africa (site: <http://www.metafro.be/prelude/authors>).

Starting from a sub-sample (817 records from

the Great Lakes region in Central Africa, 421 species of plants) (Baerts et al. data 1996) and methodology have been developed. Kasonia Kakule developed some other potential aspects of the data bank. He put the following questions (questions of good, common sense):

- Are the same plants used for the same symptoms in veterinary medicine ?
- Are the same plants used for the same symptoms both in veterinary and human medicine?
- These plants (quoted as "good" in veterinary and human medicine) do they, according to the literature at hand, have pharmacological properties which are relevant ?

The work of Kasonia led to a selection of plants passing these successive screening tests. As a supplementary contribution, Kasonia took four plants selected by the screening (as being "good" for treating asthma or cough) and he submitted the aqueous extract to a basic pharmacological method *i.e.* the relaxation of the smooth muscle of the trachea guinea pig stimulated by acetylcholine. The theophylline was taken as the reference molecule (Kasonia Kakule, 1997).

Some years after Kasonia's work, a reflection is of interest. In fact, what were we striving for ? We look at traditional recipes with our western spectacles. Are they coherent (with each other, in human or in veterinary medicine, with what we learn from pharmacology or from some pharmacological tests)?

Surely, a great number of plants did not pass the tests and from a western point of view they were rejected as being of no interest. Should we today remain so affirmative ? I just want to quote Bernard Nkongo Otto from Cameroon, a traditional practitioner : "You have to be born of the tradition to be a Nyanga (a traditional healer) ... We cure people. It is only with water, plants, barks. I say : water, plants (with the herbs also) and barks of trees... When somebody has spleenache, you take the plant or the bark for the spleen" ( de Rosny, 1996). Another one says that the Nyanga must have a double view. "First you have to shut down the mystic side of the problem. After that the disease becomes easy to cure" (de Rosny, 1996).

From a philosophical (ethical) point of view, G. Hottois ( 1990) urged us to be careful enough about what he calls "the technician system of universal pharmacology. From a Western point

of view, we are always trying to find episteme behind the *techne*, to convert implicit knowledge into explicit knowledge.

The African spirit is always in search of a community between all the living things. In Bukavu, A. Cihyoka tries to “cure four times: the soil, the plants, the animals and the humans”. This is another example of the way people claim a responsibility in the disorder of their environment. In Europe too, we begin to speak of eco-pathology; we are more and more sensitive to general pollution, to the general health of the planet. Eco-systemic health is today more than a void concept (Jabbar et al., 2000).

Our attitude to animals points out to a North-South divide when we address the animals, in particular, the cow and the dog. If we compare their status in society, they appeared to be in complete opposition. The cow is like a subject in some African traditions, an object, a machine producing milk in the western view. The opposite is true when we look at the dog. He is a “you”, a person in Paris, it is a piece of meat in a restaurant in Nigeria. But there are exceptions: the dog of the pharmacological research receives a number, an ear-tag, as well as the modern cow (Ansay and Nymenia, 1996; Ansay and Singleton, 2000; Singleton, 1998).

### PEACE

Is there a knowledge of peace ? Is there an indigenous knowledge in peace which could be opposed to a western science of peace ? Is there an *episteme* (a kind of universal theory of peace) which would be universally acknowledged ? Which supported the efforts to impose a “peace from above”? On the contrary, does there exist a *techne* in peace, built from below, a know-how or a “savoir-faire”?

Peace and conflict have been studied at length in many ways and the names of Galtung, Burton, Azar, Curle, Lederach are common references (see for example, Martinelli, 2004).

Should we, in this period of creeping and overt wars, in Central Africa, put forward the idea that peace has never been more valued than in traditional Africa ?

The African person has always put a great price on the consensus, the agreement between the different levels of reality: gods, ancestors, neighbourhood, plants, animals. The visible and invisible worlds are in constant dialogue. There

is no clear-cut separation between this world and the world from beyond. There is no compensation: a pitiful life on this earth will not receive a reward in the beyond. Accordingly, any conflict, any war will be an infringement in the order or the unity of the creation, in the network that binds together gods, ancestors, men... The African man will make every effort to restore the unity, the harmony, the relations broken down by conflict. His peace process will not be limited to a cold, distant, technocratic settlement but will be aimed at the reconciliation of the spirits and the hearts, social harmony being the supreme value. This enquiry will be restricted to the Great Lakes region of Central Africa.

### The Ubuntu is a Philosophy of Life

Ubuntu is both a noun and an adjective. It is a will of humanity, ethics, unity and harmony. Let us read Z. Manirakiza (2005). “Ubuntu is the foundation of the solidarity systems in Africa. It suggests the indispensable complementarity between people and affirms that no one can exist without the other. An adage of Zulu (South Africa) says that ‘man is man because of the other.’ From an economic point of view, Manirakiza writes that “there was no market strictly speaking”. The exchange of goods (see also A. Cihyoka, 2005 a) is the basis of acting solidarity. You give to the other what they are short of. Solidarity systems (communal works, social feasts, ...) are based on the principle of reciprocity which avoids parasitism and is a guarantee of survival.

### Traditions of Peace as Knowledge

Peace traditions compose an oral knowledge (proverbs, riddles, stories,...) piled up for centuries and transmitted by parents (but also uncles and aunts, grand parents, elders). They decide on the place in society, organize the relations between people. Hereafter is an excerpt of some proverbs gathered by a group of Nande women of Butembo (North-Kivu, RDC):

- Akana... The chick is able to give his advice to the mother hen.
- Omuviyi... He who badly speaks is a poor man.
- Ourutali... The branch cannot be taller than the three-trunk. In society, everyone has his place.
- Enzira... To cure somebody of a disease,

- the distance does not matter. In conflict resolution, patience matters.
- Omunwe... A finger alone cannot kill a louse. United we stand, divided we fall.
  - Avalume... No chief without his men. The chief decides on the basis of the advice given by his fellow men.
  - Ovukulu... To be an elder, yes, but having the capacity of respecting other people.

### Traditions as Values

Traditions are deeply rooted in some basic values. This is especially evident for the Bashingantahe of Burundi who claim a moral responsibility in return for democracy. They want to contribute to the regulation of the moral standards in a modern and pluralistic Burundi and be a kind of moral and arbitral authority (Ntabona, 2005).

**Power:** Power appears strictly controlled. One does not say : “The king has the kingship” but one says: “The kingship has the King” (Ki-Zerbo, 2003, p.73). “All power is legitimised by the moral element” writes Z. Manirakiza (2005, p.137). On the other hand, decisionmaking is a collective process of which the palabra is the best expression. Everyone has a duty, the liberty and the right to the word. Elders or empowered men speak the last. They make a synthesis of what has been said and the decision is the best answer to what the ones and the others have said.

**Ownership:** In the tradition, the land is the property of the ancestors and accordingly cannot be sold. “It is often stated that land holding in African customary law is “communal” or “corporate” or “usufructuary” by which is meant that rights in land are not vested in any individual but in some corporate group such as the tribe, ... although an individual may have the right to use the land” (E. Cotran, 1971). In the thought of the African peasants, land is first a *place* (communal territory and space with meaning) and a *tie*. For the modern State, the land is defined in priority like a *good* : an economic good to produce more value and achieve development (Mathieu, 1996). Mafikiri (1996) points out the co-existence of two types of legitimacy, one is “legal” and the other “traditional and customary”. The co-existence of these two sources of right will be the basis of conflict between land actors. Today in the East

of Congo, land conflicts represent the overwhelming proportion of the cases submitted to the local courts of Justice. Land spoliations or unjust concentrations of land pave the way for rural depopulation or enrolment of the youth in violent armed gangs. Vlassenroot and Raeymaekers (2004) say that there is an urgent need of a uniform and just legislation on the land access. Use values have always prevailed over trade values in Africa (Ki-Zerbo, 1992, p.21).

### A Culture of Alliance in the South-Kivu

**The Alliance of the Cow and the Hoe:** Many local proverbs refer to the alliance of the cow and the hoe, like : “To fence your fields is a sign of peace. To leave it unfenced is rather being provocative” and “You shall not swear at a cow. Rather speak gently and make allusion to her being a good milker”. Moreover, the traditional king intended to put an end to food shortage of his people by allocating cows and fields to them. In this way, he encouraged the integrated farming and breeding as a means to preserve peace between neighbours.

Traditionally, the 27<sup>th</sup> of December is ‘The day of the cow and of peace’ and this event is preceded by Kagala meetings. During these meetings it is decided to ‘cultivate together’. Young farmers contribute to improve the performances of pastures. In exchange, they receive manure which increases the yields of cereals and potatoes. In the beginning, manure was used primarily for export crops. Later, it was also supplied to the women for subsistence farming. Men and women are very willing to work together. They do so in many groups with different options and programmes.

Later on, pastoralists and farmers who had met during the Kagala meetings decided to work together and establish ‘peace corridors’. Before the herds would pass through the area, a group would fence the fields of vegetables and cereals (Cihyoka and Ansay, 2000).

**“Going where the others are” (Cihyoka, 2005 a)**

### Mediation by the Assembly of the Equals

In case of problems in the community, the first reaction observed among the actors is to debate the question with other people. In a rural area,

people in difficulty about a resource of survival (land, water,...) move where a group of people is supposed to be available at this very moment. At the end of an analysis of the situation, the understanding is attained amicably, acquired by the mediation of the assembly of the equals. Some elements as the illustrative proverbs, models and sketches are utilized to convince and to transform the conflict, to propose the ways and means to construct peace between the antagonists.

### To go to the “Ndeko”

In case of recidivism, the injured person can refer to the “Ndeko” i.e. to meet the person the more listened and respected of the village, often an old person or a sage of the district.

### To go to the Kagala: “Kuj’e Kagala”

The Kagala practice refers to two rituals in the traditional society :

- The *Kagala of the shepherds* recalls the yearly fairs of the prairie that the breeders call “kuj’e kagala”, an opportunity to share what the people know and have in the village. In a broader sense, this practice is recovered more and more by the groups of age, the colleagues in the cities and farming centres. It rather concentrates on the interests and on the economic and political stakes, on the simple exchanges of people’s knowledge.
- In the sage’s Kagala, one arrives early to negotiate e.g. a potion for the sick cow or for the sick child, or simply to receive advice because one has a serious difficulty. The host first receives something to eat and to drink. There are jokes on the relations between the clans, people stare defiantly at each other and “count the teeth”. Finally, you confide in all ease. A word of peace born in this meeting resuscitates life in the village, between the families or the communities in conflict.

### To go to the Ngombe or the Kagombe “Ngombe kuj’aha, e Kagombe”

The Ngombe and Kagombes are settings to return respectively justice to the level of the village and to the court of the Mwami. The first has a conciliating character and raises, for most cases, an injunction of moral order. The respect of the prescribed mode of repair is guaranteed by the

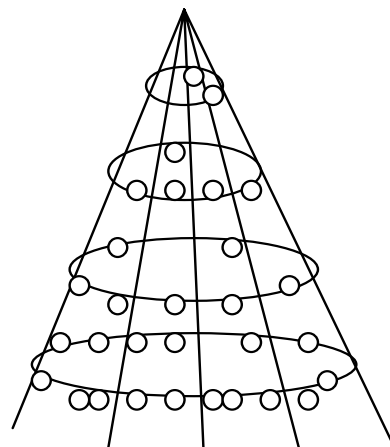
threats of social and economic embargo for the refractory. “You won’t drink anymore from the same cup as me if you don’t correct yourself “. There is, in this case, a rupture of solidarity signs. In case of wrong persistence, the person is transferred to the court of the Mwami, in the Kagombe which is dreaded by the population. The guilty person is submitted to hard labour, sometimes to exile according to the gravity of his problem, or even to capital punishment in the event he would threaten the person of the Mwami directly.

### Traditions and Values Embodied in Institutions

#### *The House of Local Community*

It receives different denominations: veranda, hut of the peasant, kyaghanda,... Its construction itself is loaded with symbols. A schematic outline is presented in Fig. 1 and a symbolic reading is given by A. Cihyoka (2005 b).

“We are in front of the roof of the hut or slot of the peasant. It is an assembly of stems of young trees and circular branches that join the sticks between them. The shape is conical. When one goes up, the sticks join themselves until a circular final point of arrival and departure of the bird of peace. What does it mean? The construction is an act of peace and solidarity. The roof of the hut



**Fig. 1. The hut of the peasant.**

*The traditional knowledge (sometimes called the recipes) is represented by the small icons (on the horizontal circles). At the end of a Kagala meeting (mutual exchange of goods, recipes, ...), the knowledge is progressively evaluated by the group and the best recipes (on the upper circles) are adopted (A. Cihyoka, 2005b).*

is made of wood of all nature but all compete to the same goal: to shelter the household. The house is very communal. A space of peace. It is not tolerated that it would become a place of transgression against the social quietude at the risk of being cursed.

The circular branches go from the base to the summit, from the biggest to the smallest and vice versa as for knowledge. The ascension goes from the popular practices to the knowledge and practices more refined toward the highest level. On the circular branches are placed the icons representing the values, the knowledge, the essential ideas and their symbols. All success in research action of the farmers is symbolized and is fixed on one of the circular branches according to the level of validation or valorisation of this knowledge or of this vital practice.”

***The Kyaghanda of the Nande (North-Kivu) (Mwana wa vene, 2005)***

The kyaghanda is the traditional veranda at the Nandes. It is a sacred cultural place that affirms itself to be the support of the “vision sociétale” nande. It is dedicated to meetings, to the customary rituals and to endless discussions. Every clan or each family has her kyaghanda. This one regroups, as members, all human and supernatural beings, of all horizons but with the mind of concord. To have the mind of concord and social peace is therefore the unique criterion for the recognition of a member’s quality. The members are the “Supreme being” called Nyamuhangas, the tutelary minds, the ancestors, all livings and the previous generations. The three invisible categories are symbolized at the time of the edification of the kyaghanda by three specific tree sticks without which the verandah does not have inspirations and celestial auspices.

***The Bashingantahe or the Word of Wise People***

This institution whose history goes back to the 17th century is being briefly presented after A. Ntabona (2005). In the tradition of Burundi, the tasks, devolved to the institution of the Bashingantahes, were the following:

- to decide litigations in the judicial way or by conciliation;
- to reconcile people and their families;
- to authenticate contracts (marriages, successions, sales, grants...);

- to watch over the truth and justice around oneself;
- to assure the security of people and goods, where they are;
- to give advice and balance to political power at all levels;
- to speak in favour of the common good, human rights and socio-political responsibility, at any time when needed;
- to authenticate, in the name of the population, the new king, the new chief and the new second-in-command;
- to look after the ecology of moral standards;
- to represent the population in all circumstances;
- to judge the opportunity of war (kugera urugamba);
- to keep watch on the war code in case of armed violence and to organize the end of hostilities;
- to organize negotiations and reconciliation after a war.

The new Mushingantahe is thus the father of human community without exclusion. The population is committed to obey him as a father. His wife is a fully-fledged partner. Today, there are a lot of suits that are decided at the level of the Bashingantahes.

However, the institution was crushed by the colonial and post-colonial bulldozer. It has therefore to be invigorated and renewed, so that it contributes to the return of peace and serve the country in an adequate way and in the context of modernity and even post-modernity, especially with the goal of revitalizing the structures of society.

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has accepted to finance the identification of the Bashingantahes through the whole country. Thirty-four thousand (34.000) Bashingantahes have been identified. The Charter of the Bashingantahes privileged the family as a body for the investiture of the new Bashingantahes. All his nuclear family was invested. The widows or unmarried women will be incorporated in a new structure, named “Abashingikirantahe” (the support of wisdom).

The important question will be the one of the constitutional place to grant to the institution. The Agreements of Arusha for the Peace and the Reconciliation in Burundi (August, 2000) recognize the constitutional place of the Bashingantahes. The rehabilitation of the order of Ubushingantahe was “expressly” stipulated (Protocol I, I chapter, article 28).

### *The Gacaca (Rutayisire, 2005)*

The gacaca or the justice on the grass is an attempt to give a fresh, modern look to an old practice which works at the level of the village communities. Every one knows the onus imposed on the justice in Rwanda. The modern courts were not able to meet the challenge of establishing the truth, punishing the guilty people and reconciling the population. At one time, the number of arrested people was 120 000. The gacaca new style has been largely documented and questioned. I like to give an echo to the question posed by P. Rutayisire : “ has gacaca maintained its capacity of healing?”

“Regardless of their weaknesses, the jurisdictions of gacaca constitute an innovation insofar as they aim to compensate the limits of the classic justice by a restorative justice.

Contrary to the classical justice system, restorative justice wants to implicate the offender, the offended person, their families, the group or the community, because the damage goes beyond the individual sphere. This approach gives more creative solutions, where it has been experimented. The main principle is that the well-being of the community and the restoration of peace and harmony are the fundamental values that must appear in the process of justice. The sought-after goal is total recovery (of the offended, of the offender and of the community) and not resentment; forgiveness instead of payment; constructive sanctions instead of sanctions with negative effects, such as imprisonment”.

### **The Challenge (and Success) of Traditional (or Restorative) Justice in Africa**

It is indeed the great challenge (and success) of traditional (or restorative) justice in Africa: to reconcile. In a sense, punishment was of relatively minor importance. What mattered is the establishment of the truth and the recovery of social harmony and of peace in the society.

### **A RE-APPRAISAL OF NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS**

Nowadays, there is a need for a strong re-appraisal of our collaboration with the South. There are many diagnoses of the global failure of the catching up of Africa in many fields from the point of view of the West. Another hint or

hypothesis is that the South has resisted the effort of the West to impose its culture, habits, technologies and cosmo-vision.

On the other hand, the reverse side of the coin is that more and more attention is currently devoted to the comprehension of African motives concerning its own development (a word that does not exist as such in African languages writes J. Ki-Zerbo, 2003). What are they striving for ? What matters are in their eyes? What is their background (history, traditions, ... ) ?

This imposes a revision of our relations. Its philosophical basis should be:

- The fragility of Western power is questioned by the solidity of some African values (Robert, 2004; Rabourdin, 2005).
- A. Ntabona (2005, p.192) of Burundi makes a plea for what he calls “interculturalisation”. The first step is to master once again the main values of one’s own culture which make “a man a man”. Second, to marry them with the values which have received the sanction of the world community. In this society the local and the global are espousing each other. Up to now, the West has never tried to catch in depth the values which support African customs.
- The intercultural contacts, established in a respectful way, can result in the improvement of local livelihoods, a sustainable society and reduction of poverty (Haverkort et al., 2003, p.247). These principles are leading to a series of practical hints.

### **HOW TO WORK WITH INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS ?**

Working *with* indigenous knowledge systems? (not *on*). “We” are much of the problem and “they are “much” of the solution (Chambers et al., 1995,p.xiv).

Recognize and Value: Knowledge, “Those Who Know”, Their Societies.

- Protection of IKS (IKS are a capital)
  - In the domain of peace. See the recommendations of the All-Africa Conference on African Principles of Conflict Resolutions and Reconciliation (Addis-Abeba, 1999)
- Strategies must be adapted to:
- enhance local capacities for peacemaking;
  - promote alternative justice systems for reconciliation;
  - promote the role of women in traditional approaches to peacemaking;



- integrate traditional African approaches into national and international mechanisms for conflict resolution;
- develop training and research on African approaches to conflict resolution and reconciliation.
- Traditional health. Dujardin (pp.137-138) gives an example of a respectful collaboration between a traditional healer (from Latin America) and a Belgian doctor.
- enhance the means at the disposal of people and institutions : what are “the best practices” (UNESCO MOST and Nuffic CIRAN) at the level of households? Encourage the publication of ad hoc manuals.
- encourage efforts of co-working with traditional values or IKS.
- promote the growing of medicinal plants either in the garden (e.g. in the rugo of Burundi) or in larger plots for/by the communities.

Consider People (their values), Environment (land) and IKS as a whole: This is a condition for a responsible local governance.

Consider the interaction between actors; peasants and herders; “the cow feeds the grass, the grass feeds the cow”. “Go where people are” (A. Cihyoka, Bukavu): this is the principle of “active subsidiarity” (P. Calame, 2003). The Bukavu procedures, the gacaca, the Bashingantahe are other examples of conflict settlement at the nearest point where they are born (the hill, the field, the village, the locals).

Prompt studies and programs on IKS in the city: in a context of *rurbanisation* (cities expanding like mushrooms following rural depopulation), but with very weak promises of industrialisation, what have IKS and their values become ?

Promote IKS and values in youth education (schools, youth movements, ...). A plea for schools deeply rooted in African problems and not a carbon copy of the western school.

Consider western paradigms in the light of IKS and values. Have a fresh look at western customs and cosmo-vision...<sup>2</sup>

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This work is a contribution to the memory of a great african “Sage”.

#### NOTES

1. A memory in Butembo 1999. A woman was dying sick of AIDS. She was the fourth to die in the same

- circumstances in her family. But she kept on saying: I am the victim of a curse ....
2. This work has been supported by the « Fondation Charles Léopold Mayer pour le progrès de l'homme(FPH)(Paris-Lausanne) .

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**KEYWORDS** African peace traditions; traditional medicine; dialog of knowledge systems; traditions and development; traditions and best practices

**ABSTRACT** The encounters between the North and the South have been marked by the "tabula rasa" philosophy. Indigenous knowledge was considered as an impediment on the road of progress. Currently, it appears that the Western way is fraught with problems of sustainability, unable to become a universal standard way of life. Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS) are revisited not only on the basis of a will of identification ("What they know? What do they know? How do they do things?") but in terms of exploring their fundamental unity or coherence and the values

which underlie them. Indigenous knowledge in Veterinary Medicine from Sub-Saharan Africa has been gathered by Baerts and Lehmann in their data bank (12 500 records) which is stored at the Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, Belgium (<http://www.metafro.be/prelude/authors>). Kasonia Kakule, working on a sub-sample of the bank, has tried to select the best recipes on the basis of a coherent research. The best ones in the domain of cough or asthma proved to be good by a standard pharmacological test. But health and disease are not looked at in the same way in the North and in the South. African knowledge in the peace domain is of an extreme diversity. It is rooted in a system of values (views on the power, the ownership, the alliances) and embodied in institutions or practices such as the Bashingantaha (Burundi), the Kyaghandu (North-Kivu, RDC), the Kagala (South-Kivu, RDC), the Gacaca (Rwanda). A reappraisal of the North-South relations must aim not only at “recognizing” the right of the South to develop according to its own path but also to consider the fact that challenges of globalisation, the “best practices” and values of the different cultures have to be summoned.

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