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Muslims in Mango (Northern Togo) : some aspects: writing and prayer : some notes on a film

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Muslims in Mango

(Northern Togo)

Some Aspects: writing and prayer

Research Report No. 27/1986



Some notes on a film by
Emile A.B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal and
Els A. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal-Baerends



Al-Hadji Sani Abdulaye,
Imam of N'zara
(= Sansanné-Mango),
North Togo
Photo: november 1969

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MUSLIMS IN MANGO (NORTHERN TOGO)

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Some aspects : writing and prayer

Some notes on a film by
Emile A. B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal and
Els A. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal-Baerends

This film is dedicated to Al-Hadji SANI ABDULAYE, Imam of N^ozara
(or Sansanné-Mango), Northern Togo from 1929 to August 14, 1970

COLOFON

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Afrika-Studiecentrum at Leiden, 1986,
and E. A. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal-Baerends,
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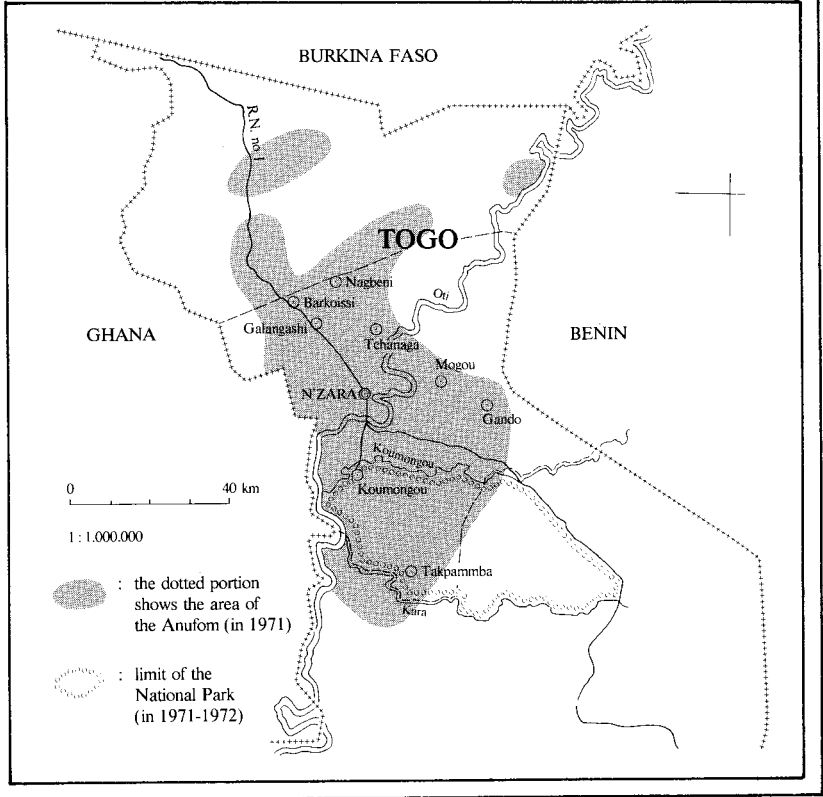
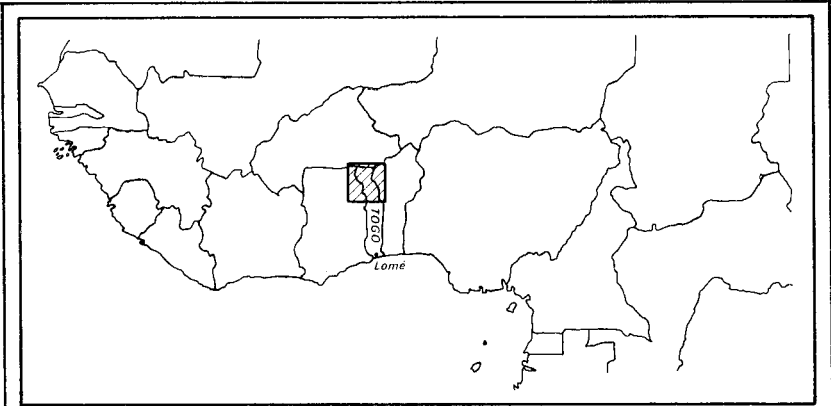
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1. Introduction

Muslims in Mango gives a cinematic impression of how Islam manifests itself in a particular West African society. It centres upon just two aspects, writing and prayer, since it would not have been possible to show the manifold aspects of Islam in this society in *one* film. Moreover, the fact that Islam here is inextricably interwoven with the original African culture means that an all-inclusive picture of Islam would only be presented within the framework of a total, comprehensive picture of the society in which it exists. This would be too much to expect of any ethnographic film and would certainly require a lengthy series of films; thus the topic was deliberately restricted to two aspects.

The film was made during our field work among the Anufom in the periods from July 1969 to August 1970 and February 1971 to November 1971. Our research was especially focused on customary law and the administration of local justice, and although the aim of our research was not the study of Islam – since the influence of Islamic law on customary law there was (still is?) negligible, with respect to civil law as well as the administration of local justice – the confrontation with the influence of Islam on various aspects of the culture was sufficient reason to devote special attention to the interaction between Islam and the original African culture. Our interest in Islam was particularly stimulated by the intellectual curiosity of a number of informants from the class of Muslims (*karamò*; pl: *karamom*¹) who never seemed to tire of lengthy discussions, not only about religious matters, but even more so about the socio-political relations within their society.

In this respect, we should specifically like to mention al-hadji Sani Abdulaye, the Imam of N'zara from 1929 to his death on August 14, 1970 and his two sons, al-hadji Yaya and al-hadji Mikaila, as well as the late al-hadji Musa of the Mande patri-clan, Nadawa Shidiki of the Gadyura Duferi patri-clan and his relatives of the Shirabu patri-clan in the ward Sangbana.

Finally, and unnecessarily, we would like to reiterate that in dealing with the

1) In the written text accompanying the film, a more or less phonetic transliteration is given of technical terms in the local African dialect, even in those cases where the terms are of Arabic origin. Where the terms as such are explicitly used as Arabic terms, the transliteration of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* (second edition) is used.



Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye, the late Imam of N^ozara (= Sansanné-Mango) from 1929 till the 14th of August 1970.

above mentioned aspects of Islam, we were interested in an anthropological approach and not in a comparison with the Sunni Islamic tradition.²⁾

2. *Our Working Conditions in N'zara*

In September 1969, Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye had already granted me permission to attend Friday services at the mosque, take photographs, shoot the film and record the sound track. My wife, however, was not permitted to enter the mosque, not even the women's section. It was emphatically stressed that I was to adhere to certain strict rules of cleanliness and correct conduct, which the Imam explained to me and which apply to every Muslim who enters a mosque, such as the compulsory ablution and the prohibition of spitting and urinating.

For various reasons, such as the technical limitations of the reflex camera with a 30-metre cassette, the fact that it was so difficult to move around in the mosque (I had to remain seated among the believers and could only move within an area of about 80 cm², being very careful not to touch anyone since being touched by someone else makes the prayer invalid³⁾, and the relatively short duration of the prayers (*salāt*: 5 min.; *adua*: 6 min.), it was necessary for me to attend the Friday services on more than 30 occasions.

The first few times I attended the services, I was nervous myself and the believers were sometimes distracted by my activities. But after some months, my presence there every week with my camera and tape recorder was accepted and no longer influenced the proceedings in any way. Several weeks after I began, the Imam stopped me as I was leaving the mosque with the words '*Nyèmè de u shere*' (May God fulfil your wishes). This is what the faithful wish each other after the prayers, and it was viewed as a clear sign that I had converted to Islam.

- 2) For a recent explication of the fundamental differences between Sunnah and Shi'ah, see e.g.: H. Enayat, *Modern Islamic Political Thought. The Response of the Shi'i and the Sunni Muslims to the Twentieth Century*, London, 1982.
- 3) What is concerned here is a local conception which has no basis in Maliki law. Almost all the Muslims of West Africa adhere to the Malikiyah or Maliki school of law. It is one of the four Sunnī schools of law today. A good explication of this school of law in a Western language can be found in: G. H. Bousquet, *Précis élémentaire du droit musulman*, Paris, 1935.

3. Muslims in Mango

The Muslims in N'zara (which is the Anufò name for Sansanné-Mango) are Africans who believe in Islam and are therefore part of the world-wide Muslim community. They believe that there is only one God and that Mohammed is his Prophet. Five times a day, they perform the ritual prayers to thank God for what he has created.⁴⁾ Their ties with the rest of the Islamic world are especially clear during the month of fasting, which most of the Muslims of Mango observe very strictly, fortified by the idea that they are doing this together with their fellow Muslims all over the world.

They are also very anxious in the pilgrimage to Mecca. The large majority of them, who will never be able to afford the journey themselves, have great respect for the happy few who have been able to carry out this ideal. Yet, the Muslim Anufom are also Africans, part of their own African society, and as such are affected by the African culture that dominates their daily lives and has had a deep influence upon their attitude towards life in general and towards Islam in particular. It is impossible to say whether the Anufom are basically Africans who happen to be Muslims, or basically Muslims who happen to be African. From the moment they recite the profession of faith, they are both. Who is entitled to say whether they are good Muslims or not? It is certainly not the task of the anthropologist to judge anyone according to the strict rules and regulations specifying a Muslim's duties and obligations, or on the grounds of his knowledge of the Koran and Koran commentaries.

This film is about the Islamized Anufom in the town of N'zara in Northern Togo. The Anufom constitute more than three quarters of the town's population of over 10.000, and they are dominant in a social as well as a political sense.

In addition to Anufom, the Muslim community of N'zara also includes a minority of Islamized foreigners of various origins: Hausa, Yoruba, Kotokoli, Mossi, and Ngbandya, some of whom have become closely integrated into the Anufò group by marrying Anufò women and settling on the territory of related Anufò lineages.⁵⁾

- 4) This is a local, non-canonic interpretation of the significance of obligatory daily prayers.
- 5) For example, the Marakasu patrilineage of Hausa origin is associated with Anufò of the Badara House; the Yorubasu patrilineage of Yoruba origin is associated with Anufò of the Shirabu house; the Ngbandyasu patrilineage of Hausa origin is associated with the Ngbandya house; the Ngbandya patrilineage, which originally came from Gonja (Ghana) is associated with the Dyabu house.

The other foreigners live in Zongo, the special ward for foreigners. Each group of Islamized foreigners has its own Imam, but all the Imams are subordinate to the Anufò Imam of N'zara, who plays a decisive role in selecting and appointing them to office.

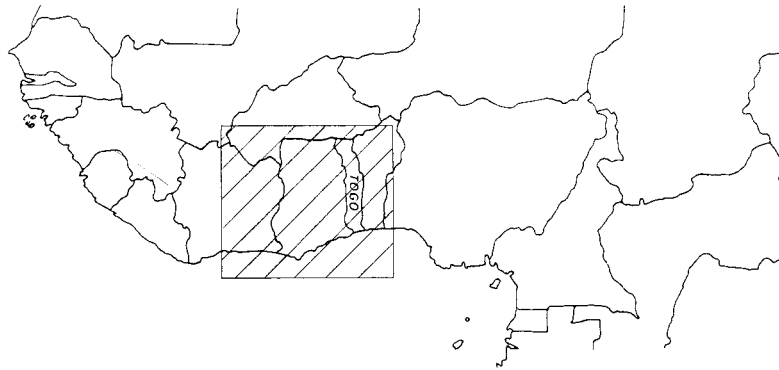
There are no statistics on the ratio between Islamized and non-Islamized Anufom. Moreover, it is doubtful whether figures would present an accurate picture of the situation for two reasons. The first of all, someone who views himself as a Muslim is not always a Muslim in the eyes of other Muslims, and secondly various groups within the society are at different stages of embracing Islam.

Generally speaking, the Islamized Anufom constitute the majority of the inhabitants of N'zara, but only a small minority of the population in the surrounding rural area. If we were to look at their number in N'zara as well as the rural area around the city, we would find that they are in the minority. But the fact is that they nevertheless play a clearly dominant role in the community that can be attributed to the Islamization of the two leading segments of the population, the *donzo* (nobleman; pl. *donzom*) and the *karamò*. In order to provide some insight into the structure of Anufò society, relations between the various segments of the population, the position of the Muslims and the influence of Islam, we will present a short history of the origins of the Anufom.

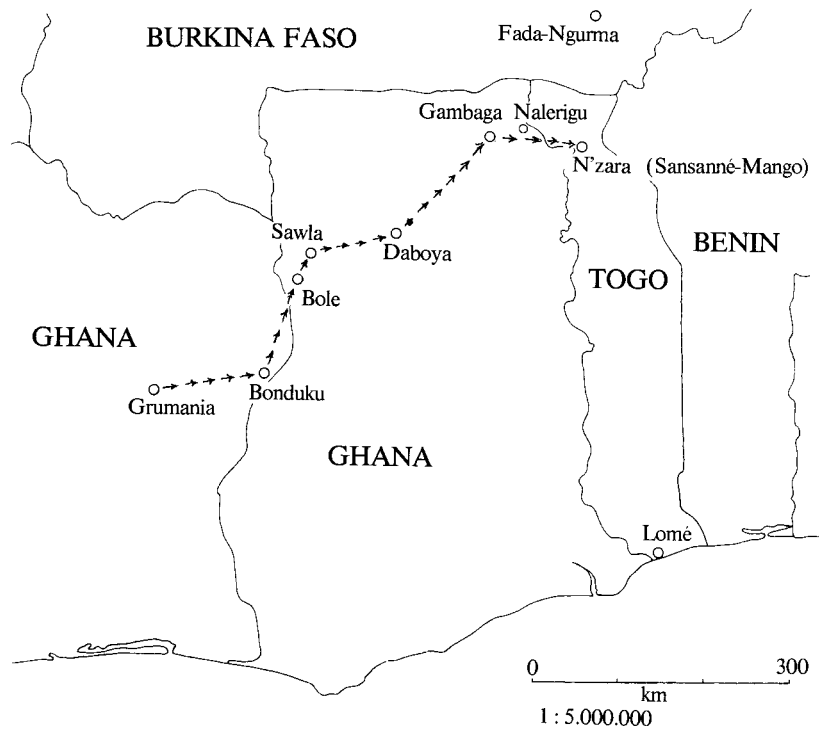
4. *The origins of the Anufom*

The Anufom originally came from the Ano region in the north of the Ivory Coast (Anufom literally means people from Ano). They left this region in the beginning of the eighteenth century, a tiny band of warriors commanded by Na Byema and Na Soma, whose reasons for leaving involved a disagreement about an inheritance. They considered it expedient to set out on a military expedition eastward. The expedition was so successful that Mama, the Paramount Chief of Gonja, summoned Na Byema and Na Soma to help him fight his enemies. A number of military expeditions, including one against the Mamprussi, finally brought the Anufom to northern Togo. There they conquered the town of Kundyuku, which is called Sansanné-Mango in Hausa (*sansanné* = army camp; *Mango*: Mango Toura, the name of the place they are from in the Ivory Coast), and which is called N'zara in Anufò.

Tradition has it that the Anufom initially had no intention of settling permanently in northern Togo, but that eventually they abandoned their plan to



The approximate Migration Route of the Anufom from the Ivory Coast to North Togo



return to Anò. Some claim it was because they were discouraged by the death of one of their leaders, Na Soma, and others attribute it to the good life on the shores of the Oti (a tributary of the Volta river), especially since the conquered people provided them with ample tributes.

Although they did not maintain formal contact with the Anò region, the Anufom are still very conscious of their origins and have never completely abandoned the idea of returning to Anò.⁶⁾ The relations within the band of warriors that left Anò were based on the relations among the seven leaders, all of whom belonged to the nobility, the *donzom*. The relationship between Na Byema and Na Soma was that of a man to his (classificatory) elder brother's son. Their descendants, who belong to the Dyabu patrilineage and the Sangbana patrilineage, still refer to each other using the terms of this relationship. The people of Dyabu refer to the people of Sangbana as 'our children'.

Nana Mama, the leader of the important *donzo* Badara patrilineage, was a maternal uncle of Na Byema (maternal uncle: *ngwè*). Nana Mama had a close friendship with a fourth *donzo* leader, Nana Yukwe, who belonged to the Anò patrilineage which for many generations has had blood relationship with the *donzo* Gadyura patrilineage, whose leader was Omoru. This Nana Yukwe was assisted by Byema Dya and Kunandi, the *donzo* leaders of the related Atyuma and Bòsòrò patrilineages.

The seven *donzo* leaders mentioned above each brought with them the members of their own patrilineage, and in addition they each had their own warriors (warrior: *ngyé*, plural: *ngyem*), who were foot soldiers, commoners.

The *ngyem* were largely recruited from the original population of Anò. The *donzom* were presumably of Mande descent, partly mixed with the original ruling group in Anò.

- 6) The most important social unit in Anufò society is the patrilineage, in the Anufò language *awuru*, here often referred to as 'house'. Most of the lineages trace their descent back to an ancestor who came from Anò to Mango approximately seven generations ago. However, in most cases the descendants have since become so numerous that separate lineage segments with a depth of three to five generations, which can also be called *awuru*, have come to function as separate units. As a rule, these segments can still trace their kinship to each other. They still collectively call each other by the kinship terms that the specific founders of the various segments used for each other, such as 'elder brother' and 'younger brothers'.

The *donzo* leaders were accompanied by Muslim advisors referred to as *karamom* (Muslim: *karamò*, plural: *karamom*; cf. the Mande word *karamòkò*: learned Muslim, from *kara*, (Arabic *qara'a* to read, and *mòkò*: person). These *karamom*, Dyula Muslims⁷⁾ who had settled in the Ano region, were knowledgeable in astrology and various forms of Islamic magic. They could draw up horoscopes, predict the future, favourable and unfavourable times for doing certain things, make amulets, recite prayers (*adua*; in Arabic: *du'ā'*), avert disaster and ensure success in a particular endeavour.

Prior to their departure from Ano, the *donzo* leaders and their *ngyé* following made a solemn agreement, confirmed by an oath on the Koran⁸⁾, with the Muslim advisors (*karamom*) specifying their respective rights and obligations. This agreement, which still remains the basis for the relations between the *donzom* and the *karamom*, stated that the *karamom* would assist the *donzom* with their knowledge, but without aspiring to any (formal) political power for themselves. The *donzom*, in turn, were to protect the *karamom*, but without interfering with their affairs, such as internal disputes or religious questions. Thus, unlike the *ngyem*, the *karamom* are not subordinate to the *donzom*. The Anufom often describe the relation between the two groups as follows: The *karamom* are the womenfolk (woman: *bara*, pl: *baram*) of the *donzom*. This is an illusion to the

- 7) I. M. Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, 1966, introduction, p. 24. 'The name Dyula, which in Malinke means 'trader', is a generic term used today to refer to a number of Malinke-speaking Muslim-named and highly dispersed corporations (such as Watara, Turay, Kulibali, Bamba etc.) specializing in commerce. Membership of these groups is generally acquired by birth, a son following his father, although descent is not usually traced to a common ancestor, nor are the groups exogamous. While in many cases cherishing Arab and sometimes Meccan pedigrees, the Dyula today seem to trace their origins and early dispersal centre to the medieval empire of Mali, from which their outwards spread apparently gathered momentum from the fourteenth century. By establishing trading colonies, and sometimes later states, these Muslim merchants created a wide-flung supra-tribal network of trade which, according to the evidence of the Arab historian Ibn Battuta, had spread widely by the middle of the fourteenth century and extended to Hausaland (the Kano Chronicle), Senegambia and the Guinea Coast (Portuguese records) a century later.'
- 8) This Koran is in the late al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's library, where we photographed it in 1971.

fact that the *karamom* never actively engage in warfare and politics⁹), which does not mean that the *karamom's* advice is not highly esteemed in both of these fields.

The *karamom's* assistance to the *donzom* in the form of predictions of things to come, horoscopes, amulets and other magic charms is given within the framework of a personal relationship between a *donzo* and a *karamò* selected by him. This personal relationship is normally continued in the following generations so that the members of a certain *donzo* patrilineage will always consult the members of a certain *karamò* lineage. The most important *karamò* lineage, the Kambaya patrilineage (in 1971!) maintains this kind of relationship with the patrilineage of Na Byema, and 'his' *karamò* Gazama (who is also his sister's son). The Kambaya house also has similar relations, but dating further back, with the Gadyura patrilineage and the Badara house.¹⁰)

Ankyibu Bunyassar (Uqba Ben Yasir), the founder of the Kambaya patrilineage, had received the hospitality of these two lineages when he came 'from across the water' to preach Islam.¹¹)

In return for his advice, prediction, or amulet, a *karamò* receives commodities or money from the *donzo* who has consulted him. In the past when the *donzom* still were engaged in warfare, it was common practice for the *karamom*, who provided them with magic charms to protect them and ensure victory, to demand part of the war loot in return, preferably horses or women.

The *donzom* needed horses for their military expeditions, and later they needed them to establish control over the region around N'zara. So horses were an important article of trade, and for the *karamom*, who remained true to their Dyula origins, trade has always been an important source of income. By taking women as prisoners of war, most of the *karamom* managed to marry four wives, the number permitted by Islamic law. Moreover, many *donzom* gave their *karamom* one of their own daughters in marriage, in the hope that as their sons-in-law, the *karamom* would be under an even greater obligation to them. The

⁹) J. Spencer Trimingham, *The influence of Islam Upon Africa*, 1968, p. 93. 'As with the native institution of griots or minstrels, the clerical class was outside the sphere of direct warfare.'

¹⁰) In Mande, Badara means 'lowland near water.' See: M. Delafosse, *Dictionnaire Mandingue*, Paris, 1955, p. 260.

¹¹) There is a document in Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's library which describes the arrival of Islam. We were able to photograph this document in 1971, and it has since been translated by Drs. R. A. M. Baesjou, who is on the staff of the African Studies Centre in Leiden.

karamom, however, only gave their daughters in marriage to other *karamom* because they wanted to ensure that the daughters would live in a good Islamic environment.

5. *Historical Documents of the Anufom*

After the Anufom came from Ano to N^ozara and settled there, the second Imam, Amadu Bandawiu, who had made the journey himself with his older brother Gazama, the first Imam (see *Imams of the Kambaya patrilineage*, p. 56), decided to have the writer Omoru Dabla record the history of the migration of the Anufom in Arabic. Since then, numerous copies of the document have been made. These copies, however, always remained in the possession of only two patrilineages: the Kambaya lineage, which was the lineage of the descendants of Gazama and Amadu Bandawiu, and the Gadyura lineage, of which the writer Omoru Dabla was a member. The Gadyura lineage has a host-guest relationship with the Kambaya lineage dating back to the time when Ankyibu Buniassar, the founder of the Kambaya lineage, came to preach Islam and was received as a guest by the Gadyura house. As a result of this contact, the members of the Gadyura lineage, who were *donzom* embraced Islam at a very early stage. The members of the Kambaya lineage, who were *karamom*, taught them the Koran and Islamic magic.

Three different copies of the document have been photographed: a copy from Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's library, a copy that was badly damaged in a fire¹²⁾ and is owned by the Gadyura lineage (Nadawa Shidiki is the head of this lineage), and a copy belonging to the Shirabu lineage, which is a segment of the Gadyura lineage. It is the third copy that can be seen in this film.

This document is not only produced and read aloud on the request of inquisitive researchers: the owners of the document read it from time to time, and they always do so in exactly the same way: one man recites the Arabic text, and another man gives a simultaneous translation in Anufò. It is not really a literal translation, but more an explanation of the text, sometimes with certain additions. That elements of oral tradition have developed from certain parts of the original text of the document is quite evident from the variations in the three different Anufò translations that we noted on different occasions.

¹²⁾ See also: R. Asmis, 'Die Stammesrechte in der Bezirke Sansanné-Mangu', in: *Zeitschrift für Rechtswissenschaft*, XXVII, 1912 pp. 73-89.

6. *Writing*

For centuries the Dyula families, the *karamom*, have had a command of the Arabic language. This is also the case with the Mande patrilineage (of Mande origin, as one might conclude from the name), which is usually viewed as belonging to the class of the *donzom*, and the same holds true for the *donzo* Gadyura patrilineage. There are very few Islamized *donzom* and *ngyem* who read and write Arabic, with the exception of those who have been on a pilgrimage to Mecca (almost exclusively *karamom*, a few *donzom*, and almost no *ngyem*). There are a few *donzom* and *ngyem* who attended Koran school as children, but since they usually have no opportunity to practice Arabic in their home environment (among *donzom* or *ngyem*), they soon forget what they have learned.

Real literacy (and some degree of scholarship) is evident among the *karamom*. One *karamò* expressed it as follows: 'I don't feel right unless there is a pen and paper within reach. When I go away from home, I always make sure I have something to write with.'

This *karamò* made his own written records of the dates of birth of his children and grandchildren. He took notes on important events, wrote things down so that he would not forget them, and always made use of his written notes to refresh his memory. When preparing for a talk with us about one topic or another, he would first make a list of the important points.

Of course there are great differences in the degrees of mastery and utilisation of writing, ranging from this comprehensive use to the mere ability to decipher Koranic verses in Arabic. Written Arabic plays a much more important role in religious context and for 'magical' purposes than in everyday situations, where French is used nowadays. Almost everyone has a relative who is literate enough in French to write letters, for example.

7. *Degrees of Islamization among the Anufom*

The degree to which the *donzom* were Islamized when they left Ano is a question which neither the oral tradition nor the documents can clearly answer. It can be said with relative certainty that several of the *donzo* lineages, including the Mande lineage, the Badara lineage and the Gadyura lineage, had already converted to Islam before their departure from Ano. The other *donzom* had probably had little exposure to Islam, if any. At the beginning of the twentieth

century there was a sharp rise in the number of *donzo* converts¹³) and within one generation, virtually all the *donzom* had converted to Islam. The conversion of the *ngyem* to Islam did not start until later, and remained mainly restricted to the town of N'zara. Very few of the rural *ngyem* have converted to Islam.

The Anufom express the fact that someone is a Muslim with the words *ifere Nyèmè*, he prays to God (*ferè*: to call; *Nyèmè*: God). In other words, he performs the five daily prayers. This clearly indicates that the performance of the *ṣalāt* is viewed as the most important criterium for being a Muslim.¹⁴)

The essential requirements for conversion to Islam, which usually takes place under the guidance of the Imam or some other prominent *karamò*, are that the convert be able to recite the profession of faith (if he cannot recite it, then it is assumed that 'his heart refuses' and the conversion cannot take place), be able to perform the *ṣalāt* and the required ablutions, that the convert have been circumcised and that he refrain from drinking alcoholic beverages, particularly millet beer. There is also special emphasis on the prohibition of engaging in 'idolatry', and there are the dietary taboos with respect to pork and the meat of any animals that have not been ritually slaughtered.

Thus in the matter of conversion, the emphasis is very clearly on the ritual aspects of Islam, and a convert can adopt these ritual aspects one by one. For example, it can take some time before the Imam confirms already existing marriages by performing the ritual Islamic wedding ceremonies, and before children are circumcised and given Muslim names.

8. Islamization in Three Classes of Anufò Muslims

The various classes of Anufò Muslims are Islamized to differing degrees.

The karamom

Long before they came to N'zara, the *karamom* were already Muslims. The ritual aspects were also mastered by the women and children above the age of

¹³) The Anufò word for convert is *yo tuba*; *yo* = do/make; *tuba*: cf. the Mande word *tubi* = repentance, submission (Arabic: *tawba*). See: J. Spencer Trimmingham, *Islam in West Africa*, 1959, index p. 248.

¹⁴) N. Levtzion, Patterns of Islamization in West Africa, p. 37 in: *Aspects of West African Islam*, (ed. D. F. McCall & N. R. Bennett), 1971, 'Professed Muslims with little or no Islamic education regard praying as the principal manifestation of their faith.'

seven. They knew how to perform the ablutions before the five daily prayers, how to recite the prayers, what time of day they were to be recited, and so forth.

Knowledge of the Koran was quite superficial. There was some use of Arabic terms, but in many cases Mande terms (referred to as *nzòkò*) were much more widely used, certainly in the past generation when most of the *karamò* lineages still largely spoke *nzòkò* (Mande), as the members of some lineages, such as the Gònò patrilineage, still do. In 1971 *nzòkò* was still used to explain the Koran.

The donzom

The *donzom* converted to Islam some generations ago. They have mastered the ritual aspects, although they observe them less strictly than the *karamom*. The *donzom* – at least in the opinion of the *karamom* – are not always expected to adhere as strictly to the regulations regarding the prohibition of alcoholic beverages, the daily prayers at the prescribed times, and fasting in the month of Ramadan. However, no *donzo* would publicly refrain from fulfilling the ritual duties. Among the *donzom*, knowledge of the Koran and the Koran commentaries is not widespread. There are, however, a number of *donzom* who are devout Muslims, many of whom have made a pilgrimage to Mecca. With the exception of this extremely Islamized group, most of the *donzom* have a limited knowledge of the exact regulations or of Arabic terms. The *karamom*, however, are of the opinion that it is the political ambition of every *donzo* which serves as an obstacle to his complete surrender to Islam: 'The pride of a *donzo* makes it impossible for him to be a truly pious Muslim.'¹⁵⁾

The ngyem

Most of the *ngyé* Muslims are recent converts, still rather uncertain in their mastery of the ritual aspects. They get very little encouragement from their immediate surroundings, i.e. their kinship group. They have very little knowledge of the Koran, and sometimes do not even know the *Fatihā*.¹⁶⁾

15) N. Levtzion, 'Patterns of Islamization in West Africa', p. 36 in: *Aspects of West African Islam*, 1971 (ed. D. F. McCall & N. R. Bennett), . . . though kings were instrumental in introducing Islam, supported the Muslims, and came themselves under Islamic influence, they did not become unqualified Muslims as long as they did not free themselves from the traditional basis of their authority. That a chief cannot be a good Muslim is implied by the Kano Chronicle.'

16) The *Fatihā* is the first chapter of the Koran. It is to be recited at the beginning of every *raka* (see footnote 26).

For economic reasons, it is more difficult for the *ngyem* to make a pilgrimage to Mecca than it is for the *donzom*. The fact that there are so few *hadjis* (Muslims who have made a pilgrimage to Mecca) among the *ngyem* is partly responsible for their limited knowledge of Islam.

Their conversion to Islam does grant these *ngyem* some degree of social prestige, but it also presents problems with respect to their kinship relations with non-Muslim *ngyé* families. A Muslim cannot allow his daughter to marry a non-Muslim, so that a Muslim *ngyé* has to give up his connubium with non-Muslim *ngyem*. This may even result in a trial if, because of his conversion, he fails to fulfil the obligation to give back a girl for every woman that his lineage has received.

9. Definitions

ashirama: Muslim, the term for everyone who professes Islam, regardless of the degree of his/her knowledge of the Koran. The term does not refer to a particular class in society, as the term *karamò* does. It is mainly used to refer to one's religious affiliation irrespective of one's ethnic background.

ashiramaya: Islam in general, the belief in Islam, the (worldwide) Muslim community.

karamò: 1. learned Muslim, cf. *karamòkò* (Mande);
2. term referring to anyone belonging to the class of families of Dyula origin in the Anufò society who have already been Muslim for generations; also used by non-Muslims in the Anufò society to refer to Muslim Anufò (especially in the rural area around N'zara).

karamò-ba: a child (= ba) of a learned Muslim; a scion of a family of learned Muslims (not yet regarded as a Muslim scholar in his own right); within the *karamò* class, this term is used to indicate everyone belonging to this class, thus indicating that there is a difference between the ascribed status of a member of an old Muslim family and the achieved status of a Muslim scholar.

karamòya: the entire body of rules of conduct, customs, etc. befitting the *karamò* class or the status of Muslim scholar. The term is also used by non-*karamom* to refer 'the peculiar way the *karamom* behave'.

10. *The influence of Islam on Daily Life*

In N'zara, the influence of Islam on a number of aspects of daily life is quite evident. It is most clearly visible in the clothing worn by the men as well as the women.

In contrast with the rural population, the women and young girls are never bare-chested (in 1971!). Outside their homes, all the married women wear a veil, which consists of a piece of material that is about one, by two yards (the traditional veil is often made of *Kabye* fabric from the vicinity of Lama-kara, 160 kilometers to the south of N'zara). Modern, brightly-coloured transparent fabrics, which are also less expensive are quite popular as well. The veil is worn over the head and shoulders, but it does not cover the face.

All the men wear something to cover their head, either a white or colourfully embroidered skull-cap or a fez or sometimes even a warm woollen cap. The *hadjis*, who have been to Mecca as pilgrims, have the right to wear a white band around their fez.

Two types of garments are worn by the men. One is a close-fitting ankle-length shirt with long sleeves that are loose at the wrists, and sometimes embroidered around the collar and on the sleeves. The other is an extremely wide robe with raglan sleeves that are so wide that they go from the wrist to the ankle. These robes are often embroidered around the collar and sometimes across the entire front and back. On ceremonial occasions, such as Friday services and funerals (*saraka*), white is worn.

The daily schedule in N'zara is set according to the time of the ritual prayers; all through the town, the believers are summoned for the *ṣalāt* at fixed times of day.

The Anufom have a seven-day week. Friday is a special day, because on Friday all the men go to the mosque for the common prayers at one o'clock. This means that no one goes to work in the fields in the morning; instead, they all dress up in their best clothes and call upon each other at home. The paramount chief of the Anufom receives callers on Friday, and this is when disputes are settled (see our documentary film *In Search of Justice*. Different levels of dispute settlement among the Anufom, 1981, 52 min).

On Friday the streets of N'zara are crowded with groups of men conversing, wearing long, loose garments which are usually white.

During the course of the year, there are several Islamic holidays which leave a clear mark on life in N'zara:

- The start of the new year (in Anufò: *dyòmenè*), especially the tenth day of the first month, the tenth of *Muharram* (Arabic: *āshūrā*).
- The *Tabaski* celebration (in Anufò: *dongi*), the twelfth of the month (Arabic: *al-‘īd al-kabīr* – the great celebration).
- The month of fasting (in Anufò: *Sungari*), known as Ramadan in Arabic, as well as the subsequent festivities (in Anufò: *mingari*; in Arabic: *‘īd al-fītr*) and common outdoor prayers on the day after the end of the fasting.

During the month of fasting, many of the daytime activities are performed at night instead: the women, for example, get up at two o’clock in the morning to cook a meal. The men rest for most of the day, then at sunset they go to the mosque to pray. Many of them spend part of the night reading the Koran.

11. *Koran School*

Most of the Muslim Anufom send their children to a learned Muslim, so that they will at least be able to read the Koran in Arabic. There are about fifteen to twenty small schools in N’zara in which the Koran is taught. The children start to attend these schools when they are about seven years old. Most of the pupils are boys, but there are also some girls at these schools, in which there is no strict separation of the sexes. The scenes in the film were shot at the Koran School of Idrissu Karamò in the Fòmboro quarter and at the Koran School of Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye in the Kambaya house.

School hours are usually from six-thirty to about eight in the morning, and after the four o’clock prayers in the afternoon. There are no classes; each pupil works at his or her own page, and from time to time the teacher or one of the more advanced pupils comes to help. They start by learning to read and write the letters of the Arabic alphabet. Once a pupil has mastered the alphabet, he learns to read Arabic words, always using the verses of the Koran as reading matter. Then the pupil spends most of the time reciting the verses of the Koran, which have been copied by the teacher or by older pupils onto wooden tablets (in Anufò: *waraka*)¹⁷). At this primary stage, the pupil is not required to be able to read Arabic fluently; nor is he required to understand the contents of the verses. That is not expected until a much later stage of Koran School, and most of the pupils never reach that stage at all. The advanced pupils, to whom the meaning of the Arabic

¹⁷) In Arabic, this word can also mean page or paper.

texts is explained, are taught on the basis of the various commentaries (*tafsir*) on the Koran. If they wish to continue their studies, they choose various learned Muslims as teachers.

The fees at the Koran Schools are high. It is common practice for the families of the pupils to present the teachers with gifts on a regular basis. When the pupils reach certain stages, special gifts are expected, usually consisting of small live stock or cola-nuts. In addition, the pupils usually work in the teachers' fields in the harvesting season (see in this connection Sembele Ousman's film *TAUW*, 1970, Senegal).

The youngest boys at Koran Schools already compete with each other to see who can recite the verses loudest without making any mistakes. The unfortunate pupil who makes a mistake is punished twice: once by the teacher with a few hard raps on the head with his pen, and again by the other pupils, who make it worse by teasing him. Rivalry plays an even more important role among the advanced pupils, who are fully aware of each other's progress (who knows a little more and who knows a little less) and do their best to outdo each other.

Since the government made education compulsory for boys and girls starting at the age of six, many of the children in N'zara must attend public school, which means that they can only go to a Koran School during the summer holidays or at hours when the public schools are closed. For the advanced pupils who want to continue their studies of the Koran commentaries, there are only a small number of qualified teachers to be found in N'zara. The few pupils who have the money, the time and the energy for further studies of Islam, the younger *karamom* often combine these studies with commercial activities in other towns, go abroad for a few months, or even for a few years, to the Ivory Coast (the town of Kong), Ghana (especially to Accra) or even to Nigeria (the town of Borgu).

Upon his return to N'zara, one young Anufò who had studied for some time in Morocco met with quite a bit of resistance to his ideas, which differed on a number of points from the opinions held by the older learned Muslims in N'zara on the grounds of their knowledge based upon the tradition in western Sudan (Burkina Faso). An older *donzo*, a *hadji*, has spent several years studying Islam in Khartoum, and his interpretations also deviated from the norms fixed by the Imam and his family in N'zara, but here the *donzo-karamò* question also played a role. It is not our intention here, however, to describe in any detail the various formal disputes within the field of Islam which are important to a small number of Muslims, but are of little significance with respect to the daily lives of the large majority of the population.

12. *Advanced Study of the Koran*

Only a few small groups of Muslims in N'zara devote themselves to a more highly advanced study of the Koran and the Koran commentaries. In the film, *Muslims in Mango* we see three of Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's sons together: the oldest son, al-hadji Yaya, and two of his younger brothers, al-hadji Mikaila and al-hadji Abu Dermane. In 1973, al-hadji Yaya was chosen to succeed al-hadji Karamò Kpyè, who died in March 1973 and had succeeded al-hadji Sani Abdulaye as Imam in 1970 (see Imams of the Kambaya patri clan house on p. 56)¹⁸. All three of these brothers have made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Al-hadji Mikaila made an overland journey with his father in 1945. Al-hadji Yaya went by plane with his brother al-hadji Amadu in 1957, and al-hadji Abu Dermane went by plane with his brother al-hadji Tafa in 1965. They meet regularly to study the Koran and the Koran commentaries, usually on Friday afternoon. Sometimes they are joined by a few other men from the Imam's house, or anyone who happens to be interested, such as the *donzo* in the film, an in-law of al-hadji Yaya, with his little son who had so much trouble staying awake.

The Arabic text is recited by al-hadji Abu Dermane, the youngest son, and the exegesis is given by al-hadji Yaya, not in Anufò but in *nzòkò* (= Mande), the language used by all the *karamom* for the exegesis of the Koran and for the translation/explanation of Arabic texts.

13. *'Islamic Magic'*¹⁹)

Knowledge of the Koran and the Koran commentaries grants those who possess it high esteem among their fellow Muslims and gives them the feeling that they belong to a certain elite group within the Muslim world. In addition, however, there is another field of knowledge that has come with Islam from the Arab world. It is a field which requires familiarity with written Arabic and the Koran and which is based, indeed, on faith in the power of the Only God, man's Helper and

¹⁸) Al-hadji Yaya was deposed in 1978, after he became involved in a political conflict. See: Chieftaincy in Northern Togo, E. A. B. van Rouveroy van Nieuwaal, in: *Verfassung und Recht*, 1980, 13. Jahrgang – 2. Quartal, p. 115-122.

¹⁹) There is no comprehensive work on Arabic magic in English. For a recent study in German, see: R. Kriss & Kriss-Henrick, *Volks Glaube im Bereich des Islams*, Vol. II: 'Amulette, Zauberformeln und Beschwörungen', Wiesbaden, 1962.

Protector. It is generally referred to by the rather unfortunate term 'Islamic magic'.

'Islamic magic' includes astrology, arithmetic, *ḥisāb*, (involving the substitution of numbers for letters), knowledge of the secret power that lies in many of the verses of the Koran so that it can be utilised for various ends, and form of geomancy (*turabi*, from the Arabic word *turāb*).²⁰). To the *karamom*, this field of knowledge, which has been carefully preserved and passed on from generation to generation, constitutes an asset which – certainly in the eyes of the non-Islamized Anufom – is of far greater value than knowledge of the Koran itself. Islamic magic is certainly more lucrative, since a *karamò* receives far greater sums for drawing up a horoscope or for writing out an amulet (*shèbè*)²¹) than the more often symbolic fees for the recitation of some part of the Koran at a circumcision or a funeral ceremony. On the other hand, the acquisition of this knowledge is also an extremely expensive process, certainly for those who have to turn to teachers outside their own family. The profits to be accrued from this knowledge at a later stage in life are already calculated into the fees to be paid by the pupil. Moreover, it is quite difficult to find a teacher willing to impart his secret knowledge, and the training is generally viewed as being rather difficult.²²).

The learned *karamò* who can be seen drawing up a horoscope in the film did state that he would be willing to initiate us in the field, and he did start to impart his knowledge to us. However, the short duration of our stay made it impossible to continue this training.

The form of fortune-telling shown in the film is referred to in Anufò as *bo myè*, or tapping on the ground (*myè*). It combines elements of geomancy (*turabi*), the substitution of numbers for letters (*ḥisāb*) and astrology. The element of geomancy seems to be the least clear. Something is written in fine, washed river sand, though it is very well possible to make the exact same calculation on paper. However, the entire act, of writing in the sand takes place within an hour and in the presence of the client, whereas the calculations on paper are often more time-

20) The Arabic word for geomancy is *ḍarb al-raml*.

21) *Shèbè*, see: J. Spencer Trimingham, *Islam in West Africa*, index, p. 245: *sebe, sewe, sefe* (Mande). It is the general term in western Sudan and Guinea for a written charm.

22) The difficulty encountered by the social researcher in studying this field of knowledge is that even if one does have the opportunity to observe the application of this secret knowledge – which requires the permission of the client as well as of the expert involved – the explanations of the acts performed and the ingredients used will always leave much to be desired if the researcher has not been completely initiated into the field.

consuming and do not take place in the presence of the client, who is (only later) informed of the results. This kind of fortune-telling is based on calculations made with the numbers arrived by substituting numbers of the letters of a name according to the principles of *ḥisāb*. In the case of *turabi* the numerical value of the client's name is the starting-point. Use can also be made of the numerical value of the client's parents' names or, as in the case in question, the numerical value of the name of the woman the client wanted. The nature of the calculations is determined by all kinds of astrological data. The client's date of birth is of importance, but often remains an unknown factor, and it is this astrological date that plays a role in the results and in the advice then given to the client.

14. *A comparison of 'Islamic magic' with Other Types of Fortune-Telling*

Compared with the non-Islamic types of fortune-telling in the Anufò society, it would seem reasonably safe to conclude that Islamic magic puts greater emphasis on predicting the future, whereas non-Islamic fortune-telling is more involved in analysing the past and the present, with a view to the immediate future.

It is very fashionable for an Anufò to consult both types of fortune-tellers, but he would do so in different cases. The Islamic type of fortune-telling would seem to be more mechanical; the psychological insight, or the possible clairvoyance of the fortune-teller, would seem in our eyes to be less important than in non-Islamic fortune-telling. The Anufò also have another type of fortune-telling that is more or less in between the two. This kind of *bo myè* is always practised by a Muslim. Short and long lines are drawn, instead of Arabic letters being written in the sand. Arabic texts are consulted, but the explanation of the fortune-teller is inspired by a 'spirit' which he calls 'my *shitana*' (*shitana*: devil) and which he has drawn with a ball-point pen on the first page of the Arabic book he consults for the fortune-telling. This type of fortune-telling has not been included in the film.

If the fortune-telling is to succeed, it is necessary (*wayibu*) that, at the beginning, the fortune-teller summons the help of five prophets: Mohammed, Isa (Jesus), Musa (Moses), Ibraïm (Abraham) and Nuhu (Noah), 'the five prophets who suffered the most'. He writes the names of these prophets in the sand, and says a prayer (*adua*), followed by the *Fatihā*, for each of them (a personal prayer, the *adua*, always has to be followed by the *Fatihā*; see also the Friday Services, p. 43). The summoning of intermediaries between the fortune-teller and the Supreme Being who gives the fortune-teller his insight also takes place in non-Islamic fortune-telling. In that case the intermediaries are the deceased

teachers/ancestors of the fortune-teller. The functions of the intermediaries are to transmit insight to the fortune-teller and to protect him from the powers that he unleashes and the possible mistakes he might make in applying these powers. After the fortune-telling is over, the client must make amends for the fact that he has brought about such a momentous act (*sa nònòrì*; *sa*: thing, matter). The Anufom express this by saying that the client has a *hakè* (roughly translated as an 'infringement upon a state of equilibrium') with respect to the fortune-telling act. In order to eliminate this *hakè*, it is desirable (but not compulsory) that the client makes a sacrifice (*saraka*), and he can choose from three alternatives:

- sacrificing a sheep or ox;
- having a meal made consisting of all the available kinds of harvest produce: various kinds of millet, maize, various legumes and a chicken, and serving this meal to the children;
- giving away whatever he loves most.

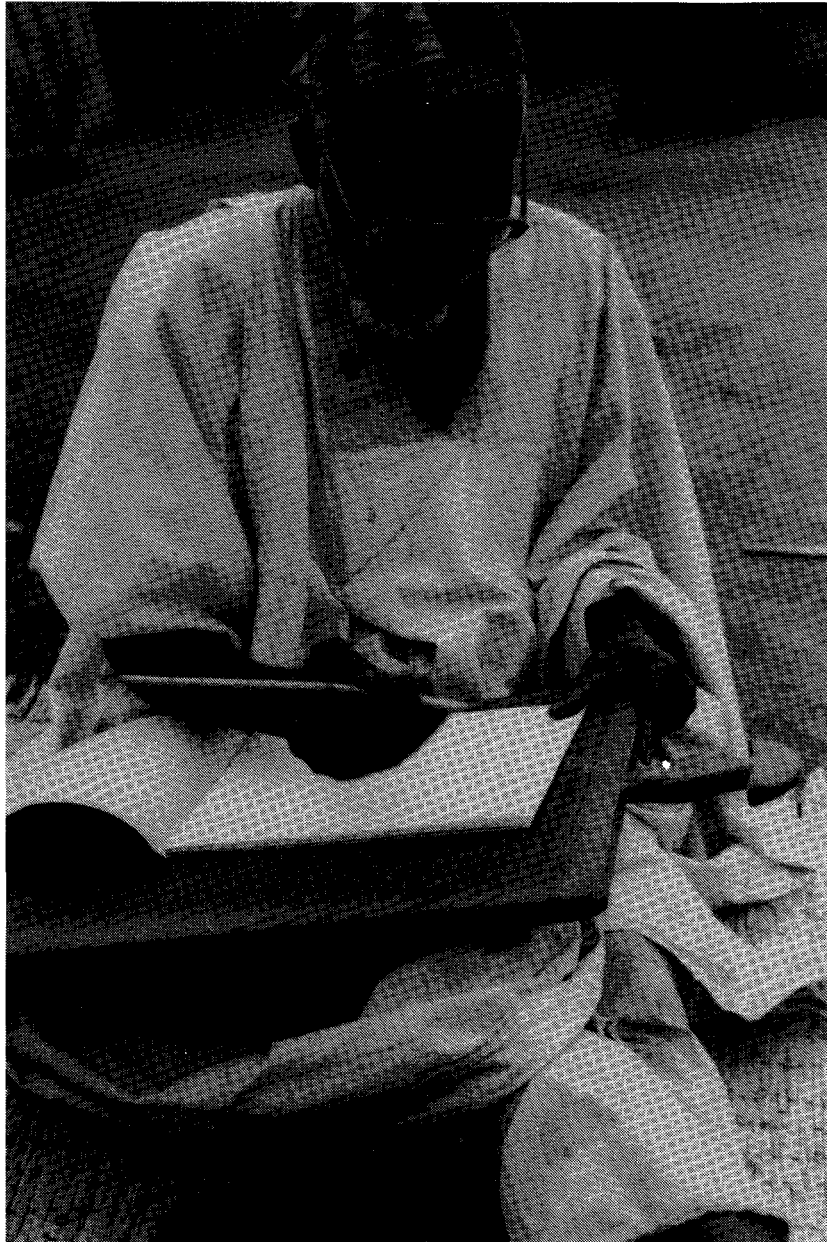
This *saraka*, however, is not the same as the *saraka* which, as the outcome of the fortune-telling, the client is advised to perform in order to achieve his goal; in this case, the *saraka* is a red rooster that must be slaughtered in order to suppress an incipient dispute.

15. *Written Arabic Texts Used As Magic*

Written Arabic texts are the basis for the most common magic charms in Islam, charms which are also very popular with the Anufom, not only among the Muslims but among the non-Islamized population as well.

The man seen at work in the film does not belong to the class of *karamom*. He belongs to a family of *donzom* who had already converted to Islam before leaving the native region of the Anufom i.e. the Gadyura family, which has been referred to above in connection with the document about the history of the Anufom.

No matter what the purpose of the magic to be used, a suitable Arabic text can almost always be found. These purposes include protection against witchcraft, love problems, defence against enemy arms, or passing an examination at school, as is the case in the film. The text can be used in three different ways. In the case shown in the film, all three methods are employed, although this is not necessarily so in other cases. The first method is referred to as *nashi*. When this method is used, the text is written in ink on a wooden slate specially made for this technique. The slate has a smooth surface that has not been whitewashed with a solution of white clay, as is the case with an ordinary writing tablet. After the text is written



Nadawa Shidiki of the Gadyura family preparing a *shèbè*

on the slate, it is immediately washed off with a bit of water. The mixture of water and dissolved ink is carefully collected in a bowl. This water then constitutes the medicine (*nashi nzue*: water of the *nashi*) which one takes by drinking it and by rubbing one's face and head with it. In most cases, it has to be prepared and taken every day for seven days, often mixed with milk and honey. In order to make the amulet (*shèbè*), the text is written on paper, which is then carefully folded up into a small square wad. The wad is wrapped up in cotton thread, and then the client must sew it into a little leather pouch, which he can wear on his body. It was quite common for the Anufò warriors to wear leather belts with texts sewn into them to protect them when they went to war. The third method involves a very common cosmetic preparation: *kari*, a kind of mascara. As is the case in the first method, the text is dissolved in water; the mascara is mixed with this water and then dried. The powder which is prepared in this way grants the person who applies it to his eyelids the power contained in the text. This kind of cosmetic preparation is frequently used to defend the user against witchcraft, and to enable him to recognise witches with the naked eye. In this case, however, it is certainly true that one must possess a certain amount of power if one is to use such a dangerous kind of magic without running the risk of endangering oneself in the process. Powerfull magic can be just as detrimental to the user as powerful medicine.

16. *Saraka*

The reaction of prayers for a deceased Muslim takes place on the first, third, seventh, twelfth and fortieth day (though in the Anufom interpretation, the fortieth day is usually about a year later) after death. The immediate relatives of the deceased person request the Imam and a number of learned Muslims to come and recite the prayers on these days. These ceremonies are referred to as *saraka* (Arabic: *ṣadaqa*),²³ and consists of the recitation of certain Arabic texts, which are distributed among the persons at the ceremony who can read Arabic, and the joint recitation of a personal prayer (*adua*, see p. 39), led by the Imam, and followed by the recitation of the *Fatihā*.

The persons present here include all the adult males of the patrilineage of the deceased. Each person contributes a sum of money varying from 25 to 100 CFA (francs = 2 French francs). After the prayers, the money and a number of cola nuts are distributed among the persons present. The amount of money and the number of cola nuts that each person receives depends on his social position and on his share in the recitation of the Arabic texts.

²³) *Saraka* – J. Spencer Trimingham, *The Influence of Islam upon Africa*, 1968, p. 63: '*Zakat* is distinguished from *ṣadaqa* in that it (*zakat*) remains a levy, even though left to the discretion of the individual, whilst *ṣadaqa*, purely voluntary, has acquired a special significance. It may mean no more than almsgiving, it may be an offering made in the name of God or the ancestors which is not consumed by the offerers but given to the clergy and the poor. There are two forms of *ṣadaqa*: that which is offered at the great Islamic festivals and to sanctify family events at birth, marriage or death, or safe return from a journey, and the like, whilst the other is an offering which seeks to attract divine approval and protection for man's activities – cf. the *saraka* to be held after the drawing of a horoscope – such as *ṣadaqa* to ask for rain, or to seek the help of God's spirits at the stages of cultivation. The two ideas may merge. The common element in the two forms is that the *ṣadaqa* is offered in the name of God and not consumed by the offerers.' I. M. Lewis, *Islam in Tropical Africa*, Introduction, Islam and Traditional Belief and Ritual, p. 72: '*Ṣadaqa*: voluntary alms; a wide range of meritorious gifts to all categories of the poor (includes formal sacrifice of meat and other offerings to God) . . . *ṣadaqa* becomes synonymous with sacrifice and even in urban areas of the Sudan Republic is regularly used to mean a memorial service for the dead.'

Then the *adua* and the *Fatihā* are recited again. The Anufom explain this prayer for the deceased as follows: 'When someone dies, you can never be sure whether you were in his heart just before he died. You do not know whether there was peace between you and him, or whether he bore some kind of grudge against you. In order to be sure that peace has been made between him and us, we hold a *saraka* for the deceased.'

At the close of the ceremony, the family of the deceased serves a meal consisting of rice balls and meat sauce. In spite of the contributions by relatives and kins, holding the required *sarakas* after someone's death is a rather heavy financial burden for the immediate family

17. Prayer (*ṣalāt*)

The ritual prayer, the *ṣalāt*, is a duty which is rather strictly adhered to. It is also a criterion for whether or not one is a Muslim. If someone faithfully recites the five daily prayers, then he is a Muslim, and if he fails to do so, then he is not²⁴). Every Islamized Anufo knows what times of day he is supposed to recite the *ṣalāt*. Moreover, in Nᵛzara he is summoned to prayer by the muezzin at the town's various mosques.

*The Five Daily Prayers*²⁵)

<i>Anufo and Arabic terms</i>	<i>Times of Day</i>	<i>Contents</i>
<i>suba</i> (<i>ṣalāt as-ṣubḥ</i>)	first call: 4:00 A.M. second call: 4:30 A.M. starts at 4:50 A.M. before sunrise (fixed time)	2 voluntary <i>raka</i> ²⁶) 'to greet the mosque', when the Imam has arrived: 2 consulpory <i>raka</i> and <i>adua</i> <i>aloud</i>
<i>asaḡar</i> (<i>ṣalāt az-ẓuhr</i>)	first call: 12:30 P.M. from 1:00 to 2:00	4 compulsory <i>raka</i> and <i>adua</i> <i>silently</i>
<i>lasari</i> (<i>ṣalāt al-'aṣr</i>)	3:00 to sunset	4 compulsory <i>raka</i> <i>silently</i>

²⁴) A Muslim woman can request a divorce on the grounds that her husband no longer faithfully recites the five daily prayers. If the husband does not mend his ways, the Imam will dissolve the marriage.

²⁵) Information: the late Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye of the Kambaya house.

²⁶) *Raka* = genuflection units. Each prayer consists of two to four genuflection units. Each unit consists of a standing posture, during which verses from the Koran are recited, as well as a genuflection and two prostrations. At every change in posture, 'God is Great' is recited. Tradition has fixed the texts to be recited in each posture.

<i>Mangariba</i> (<i>ṣalāt al-maghrib</i>)	after sunset, time changes according to the seasons, between 5:30 and 7:00 P.M.	3 compulsory <i>raka</i> and <i>adua</i> <i>aloud</i>
<i>lisha</i> (<i>ṣalāt al-'ishā</i>)	after twilight, also changes according to the seasons, after 7:00 P.M.	4 compulsory <i>raka</i> and <i>adua</i> <i>aloud</i>
extra prayer <i>shefiri wutiri</i>	late at night just before one goes to sleep ²⁷⁾	3 <i>raka</i>

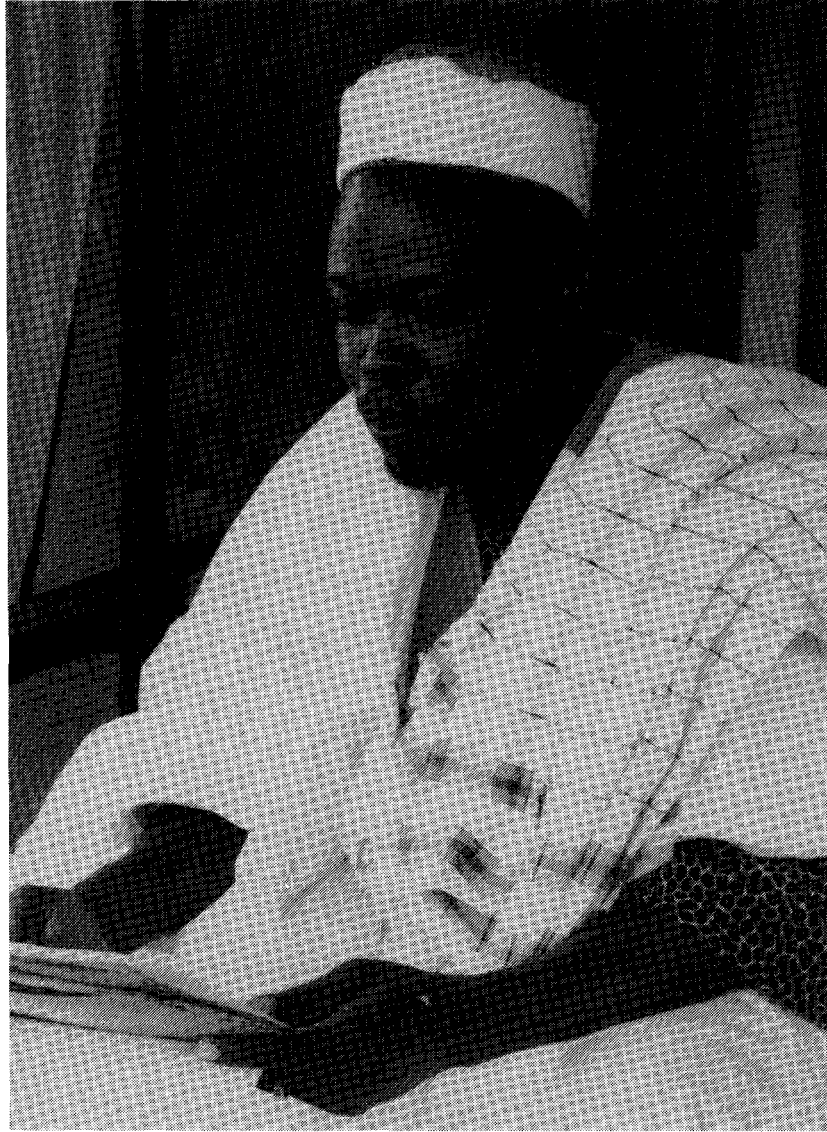
Why is it specified that the *suba*, *mangariba* and *lisha* should be recited aloud and the *asaḡar* and *lasari* silently? Early in the morning everything is still very quiet. If someone says something aloud then, he can hear what he is saying and other people can hear it too. The same holds true for the evening. At the times of day when the *asaḡar* and the *lasari* are recited, however, there is a lot of noise. The believer has to shut himself off from all the noise if he is to be fully aware of what he is reciting, which is why he says the prayer in silence.

The extremely pious Muslims – generally the older *karamom* and several *donzom* who have been to Mecca – perform the ordinary daily prayers in the mosque, preferably the mosque of their house. Most Muslims are very strict about reciting the prayers at the proper times of day. In N^ozara, there are a number of muezzins who chant the call for prayer five times a day. The names of the five prayers are only known to Muslims who have made a somewhat deeper study of Islam.

There is rather extensive social control among the Anufom who call themselves Muslims with respect to the five daily prayers, even among those who recite the prayers in their own homes. A group of men standing around and talking breaks up just before it is time for one of the daily prayers, and a court session

27) Al-hadji Mikāila, a son of Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye of the Kambaya house said, 'If you recite this prayer, you go to sleep thanking God; you wake up in the morning thanking God and you go to sleep thanking God. This is how God wants you to live.'

presided over by the paramount chief of the Anufom is adjourned with the words *ya kò fere Nyèmè*, 'We are going to pray' (*fere* = call; *Nyèmè* = God). It is the duty of a Muslim wife to get up early enough to fetch fresh water for her husband's ablutions before the morning prayer at ten to five.



al-hadji Mikaila, son of the late al-hadji Sani Abdulaye.

18. Prayer (*adua*: Arabic *du‘ā’*)

The difference between the ritual prayer, the *ṣalāt*, in which the believer expresses his gratitude for all that has been created, and the personal prayer, the *adua*, is expressed in Anufò by the following two expressions: *ferè Nyèmè*, to call God (referring to the *ṣalāt*) and *shere Nyèmè*, to ask God something (referring to the *adua*). In common usage, the term *ṣalāt* is not frequently used. People say *nkò ferè Nyèmè*, I am going (*kò*: = to go) to pray, more often than *nyo ṣalāt*, I recite (*yo* = to do) the ritual prayer. The term *adua* is very common: people say *yo adua*. If a person wants to specify what he has asked of God in his personal prayer, he uses the term *shere Nyèmè*. *Nshere Nyèmè lafia*, for example, means I ask God for health. It is also used in the expression. *Nyèmè de ushere*, May God fulfil your wishes, the words always recited at the end of a communal *adua*.

An informant from the Kambaya house (segment of the late Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye) made the following comments about the *adua*:

'After the *ṣalāt*, together with the Imam, we hold an *adua* in which we ask God for whatever it is we want from Him; and God will protect us (*yo tyshi*) from whatever it is we ask Him to protect us from. God himself has said: when you have finished the prayer (*ṣalāt*), wait a moment and then ask Me what you want.

Every person has to pray to God. The *adua* is a prayer that rises from the heart. Even if someone has everything he can possibly desire, he still has to keep asking for good health.

If someone has given you something, take the case where someone has promised you his daughter in marriage, or when there has been a reconciliation between two people, then an *adua* (a communal *adua*) is held. In this case, we speak of an *adua for the 'repair of good relations.'*²⁸⁾

The request addressed to God in the *adua* is always formulated in the person's own language, Anufò, but in many *aduas* verses of the Koran are also recited, which are expected to have very specific effects. There are texts for specific occasions such as name - givings, betrothals, marriages and funerals, or when a request is made for rain, for the safe return from a journey, protection against illness and witchcraft, and even for harm to be done to others. Requests for harm

²⁸⁾ In a general sense, *yo dongu* means to restore or repair, in this case to restore good relations: *yo* means to do or to make.

to be inflicted upon others were of special significance when the Anufom were still at war.

When these special Koranic texts for individual protection are recited, the *adua* assumes the nature of an incantation or magic spell, which is intensified by the fact that certain acts are then performed and certain objects are used, such as hair, elephant excrements, and animal organs.

Knowledge of the Koranic verses for these *aduas* and of the required ingredients and acts to be performed is a highly valued and highly secret possession which, even within a family, is only passed on to extremely intelligent and conscientious sons.

adua an ordinary personal prayer to God in which someone asks for something, and which can be performed by each individual as well as by a group with an imam leading the prayer; the request is formulated in Anufò and alternates with recitations of the *Fatihā* .

adua a prayer on a certain occasion, such as

- name-giving, betrothal, marriage or funeral;
- request for rain in times of severe drought;
- purification of a place after a violent death or before a new village (or home) is built or a market is held etc.;
- reconciliation, consisting of a specific Koranic text and a prayer in Anufò alternated with the recitation of the *Fatihā* .

adua a prayer for personal protection against such things as illness and witchcraft, etc. or for inflictation of harm upon someone else. The special Koranic text for the purpose one hopes to achieve is recited and/or written down. The written text can be made into a magic charm in various ways:

- it may be written in ink on a tablet and then washed off to produce a liquid that someone can drink and can use for a ritual ablution (*nashi*; *nashi nzue*, see p. 33); mascara can also be impregnated with this liquid so that the magical effect of the text can be applied with the mascara to the eyelids;
- or, it may be written on paper and then made into an amulet (*shèbè*) that can be worn on a weather belt, in a leather pouch around the neck, or sewed onto a garment (see p. 33); the shirts (*bògònò*) that the *donzom* used to wear when they went to war were covered with these amulets sewed into leather in tiny squares or triangles.

19. Mosques

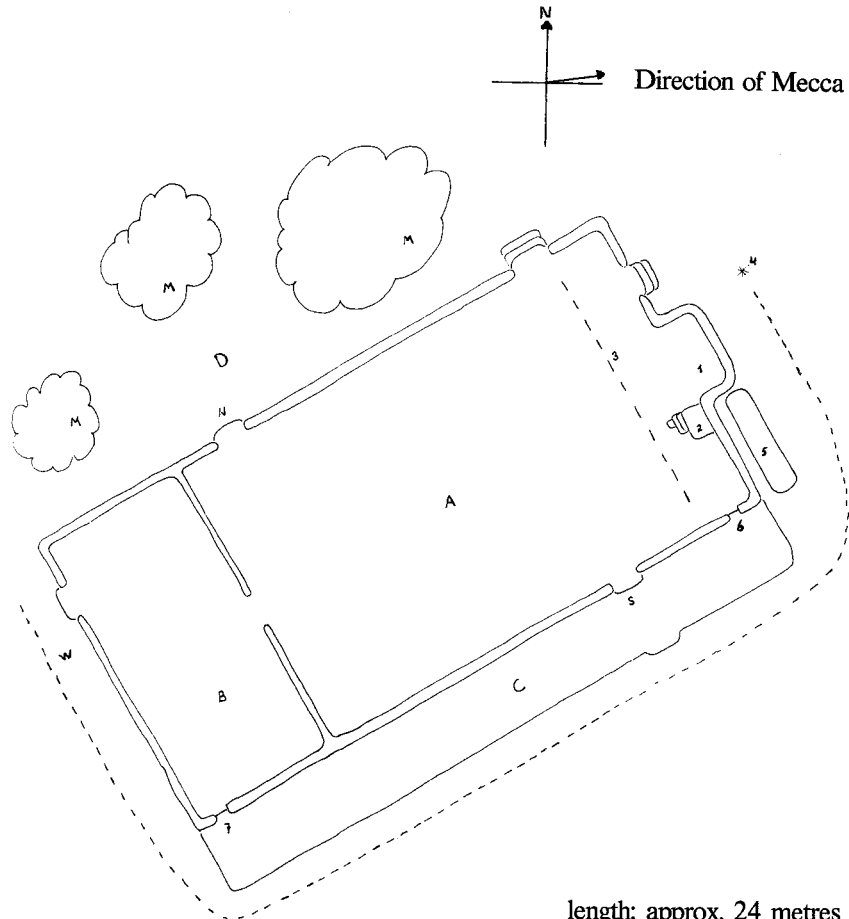
There are about ten mosques in N'zara, each one belonging to a particular patrilineage (*awuru*; see note 6) which bore the costs of its construction as a group. Although most of the mosques are simply constructed, using sun-baked bricks covered with a layer of loam, dung and cement, even the smallest mosques are about eight times the size of the average hut. The roofing always consists of corrugated sheet iron, which means that, according to local standards, the effort and investment involved are quite high.

After he returned from his pilgrimage to Mecca, Na Byema Tabi (the paramount chief from 1935 to 1958) had a mosque built which was the only one in N'zara with a small Arabic-style minaret. However, the mosque where the entire Muslim congregation of N'zara gathers from the afternoon prayers every Friday was built by Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye on the grounds of his compound (situation until 1978). See the plan on the next page.



Mosque in Kambaya (Imam-deka)

Plan of the Mosque in the Kambaya House (situation in 1971)



length: approx. 24 metres
width: approx. 11 metres

1. *mihrab* (niche)
2. *minbar* (pulpit)
3. first row of believers
4. spot where the muezzin chants the call for prayer
- path of the muezzin
5. grave of Imam al hadji Sani Abdulaye
- 6/7 windows

- A men's section
- B women's section
- C indoor terrace
- D outdoor terrace
- M mango tree
- N north entrance
- W west entrance
- S south entrance

20. Friday Services

At noon, Karamò Kã, the muezzin of Kambaya, chants the first call for prayer. Then he walks along the southern and western sides of the mosque and back again. During this walk, he recites a special text aloud. At twelve-thirty, Karamò Kã stops as soon as he returns to the eastern side next to the *mihrab* (see the plan of the mosque). Then he chants the second call for prayer, the text of the second call is the same as the first.

In the meantime, many of the believers have arrived at the mosque, since there is thought to be great merit to performing a prayer of two *raka* prior to the congregational prayer at one o'clock.

The Kambaya mosque has become too small to hold all the believers. Consequently, the indoor area is reserved for the oldest and the most prominent believers. The others gather in row on the northern and southern sides of the mosque, but always in such a way that everyone is behind (i.e. to the west) of the Imam.

The ablutions are generally performed at home since no one lives further than a ten minute walk from the mosque. There is a well in the yard in front of the mosque (not included in the plan of the mosque), but believers seldom perform their ablutions here unless they are strangers not staying with a host.

At ten to one, the Imam arrives at the mosque, preceded by Karamò Kã, the muezzin, and accompanied by two small boys and two young men who sing the following text²⁹):

'Mohammed has revealed the message from God to us;
Mohammed takes people under his protection and shows them the
way,
we have accepted Mohammed's message.
The blessing and protection of God is with every person who truly
believes in Him.'

The Imam enters the mosque and the muezzin chants the third and last call for prayer. By then, all the believers should be present.

The Imam ascends to the *minbar* (see plan of the mosque), a simple raised platform to the right of the alcove. Standing and facing the congregation, the Imam reads the Friday sermon (in Anufò: *hutaba*; in Arabic: *khutba*).

²⁹) Quotation from the *risala*: 'The value of communal prayer is twenty-seven levels higher than that of individual prayer. This is particularly the case with the public service on Friday. This service, between noon and night fall, should preferably take place in a cathedral mosque for a minimum of twelve believers, not including the Imam.



Karamò Kā, the muezzin of Kambaya.

The text for the Friday sermon is fixed, but there is a different text each Friday. The Anufom call the Friday sermon the 'advice'. Each time the Imam speaks the name of Mohammed, the muezzin repeats: 'God's blessing (*nyèma*) and protection rest upon Mohammed'. The Friday sermon closes with the words: 'May God forgive my errors and yours'³⁰⁾ to which the muezzin responds by saying *ami(n)*.

Then the muezzin turns to the believers who have been sitting and listening and says *safu, safu, safu* (line up), so that they then stand up and prepare for prayer³¹⁾. Now the leader of the prayer – in this case – al-hadji Yaya, the eldest

³⁰⁾ This is the English version of our informants' translation of the Arabic texts into Anufò.

³¹⁾ This is a local variant. The normal course of affairs is that the standardized text of the call for prayer (*adhān*) is chanted once in a loud voice outside the mosque and once in a softer voice inside the mosque.



The late Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye reading the Friday sermon.

living son of the late al-hadji Sani Abdulaye³²) – once again speaks the text of the call for prayer, including the profession of faith:

'God is Great,
There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is His
Prophet,
Come to prayer, come to Salvation,
the prayer is about to begin,
God is great,
there is no God but Allah.'

The muezzin responds with the words, 'Who is more powerful than all beings? It is God; God is great!'

By then the Imam has descended from the *minbar* and is now standing in the alcove facing Mecca. In a loud voice, he pronounces the intention to pray (in Arabic: *niyyah*).

'I, the Imam, trust my heart to God.
I, the Imam, stand before the believers to perform the prayer; this is compulsory (*wadyibu*), it is our duty to perform it.'

After the Imam's *niyyah*, the believers pronounce the following *niyyah*:

'We believers have entrusted our heart to God, we are here to perform the prayer and we follow the Imam in prayer.'

From that moment on, the prayer has commenced and the Imam is responsible for the entire congregation. Without the *niyyah*, the prayer is of utterly no value. The gesture made during the uttering of the *niyyah* – the hands in front of the chest, palms upwards, thumbs turned outwards – is very short (several seconds) and is usually made under the loose prayer robe, so that nothing more can be seen than a quick bulging under the top part of the robe.

The following movements are made by the congregation, not simultaneously with the Imam but a few seconds later.

³²) Al-hadji Yaya was the Imam of N'zara from 1973 – after the death of Karamò Kpyē, who had succeeded al-hadji Sani Abdulaye in 1970 – until 1978. For the Imams of the Kambaya house, see p. 56.

- takbir* – standing, hands outside the prayer robe at shoulder level or next to the ears, palms forwards, thumbs turned outwards; the believer says *Allāhu Akbar* (God is the Greatest).
- ruku* – standing, leaning forwards at the waist with a straight back, the hands resting on the knees; the following words are cited three times: 'Praised to God, the Powerful'.
- takbir* – see above.
- sudjud* – prostration, whereby first the knees, then the hands and lastly the forehead touch the ground; as soon as the forehead touches the ground, the following words are spoken: 'Praised to God, the most Supreme'.
- takbir* – see above.

After the first prostration, the believer rises to a sitting position, the legs folded to the left of the body, thus not sitting on the heels, the hands on the thighs, the face turned to the ground in front of the knees.

- sudjud* – from this position, a second prostration. After this second prostration, the believer stands up.
- takbir* – end of the first *raka*.
The Imam recites a Koranic verse; the believers listen.
- ruku* – see above.
- takbir* – see above.
- sudjud* – see above.
return to sitting position.
end of the second *raka*.
- atayatu* – in a sitting position, the believer puts his right hand, with the index finger extended, next to the right knee and moves the index finger back and forth. The profession of faith (*shadaka*) is spoken at the same moment.

asalamu – The prayer is ended by greeting the other members of the congregation. The believer lowers his head in the direction of the Imam, lifts his head, nods to the right to greet the believers on his right (*asalamu aleikum*), lifts his head (*asalamu*), lowers his head in the direction of the Imam (*aleikum*), lifts his head (*asalamu*), nods to the believers to his left (*aleikum*).

After the ritual prayer, everyone remains seated; there is some shuffling but not a word is said. The believers take their prayers beads in their hands and recite each of three praises to God thirty-three times.

Suḥbān Allāh (God be praised)
Al-hamdu li'llah (Praise to God)
Allāhu Akbar (God is the Greatest).

The congregational prayer is followed by a congregational *adua* (see p. 39), with the Imam praying aloud in Anufo. In this prayer, repeated requests are made for God's blessing (*nyèma*) and protection (*tyishī*) for all the believers present and the members of their families. Every supplication uttered by the Imam is responded to by the muezzin and the believers with the words *ami(n)*, *ami(ni)* *Allāhu*.

The text of this *adua* is as follows³³):

Yè Nyèmè fere Nyèmè de ma i ya – *ami(n)*
May God accept our prayers,

Yangashi kèrè yèyori Nyèmè yaki ya gmuusa – *ami(n)*
May God forgive all our mistakes,

dike be yèdi na yènu Nyèmè ma i ya
May God give us what we eat and drink,

³³) 'I have gathered together my greetings to bring to God; I have brought my own heart and my aid to God; all the property that you can seek, all must depend on God; God's Blessing and His Protection are granted to the good people and the people who have given truth to God.' We are grateful to al-hadji Mikāïla of the Kambaya house, a son of Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye, for the French version of this text.

Nyèmè ima ya lafia – ami(n)
May God give us health,

yè wufò nnyòmni, ni yè ngumin, Nyèmè yaki bu gmuussa – ami(n)
May God forgive the errors of our parents and ancestors,

ba baraka Nyèmè fa ma i ya – ami(n)
and may God grant us the same blessing (as the parents and ancestors).

Immediately afterwards, the *Fatihā* is recited by the entire congregation with the appropriate movements of the hands: the hands are held in front of the chest, palms upwards, thumbs pointing outwards. At the end of the Koranic verse both the hands are lifted to the face, the palms turned to the face and turned slightly to each other as when the hands are folded. With both hands, the believer strokes his face in a downward direction, the fingers passing from the forehead to the nose and then over the cheeks and chin. The slightly folded hands rest for a moment under the chin, and are then spread again, the palms upwards, the thumbs pointed outwards, and are held in front of the chest at the moment when the word *Fatihā* indicates that the Koranic verse is to be recited again.

After an *adua*, the *Fatihā* is always recited because, in the Anufò view, it combines an homage to God and a request for His aid: 'Thee do we serve and on Thee do we call for help'.

After the *adua* has been concluded and the *Fatihā* has been recited, the believers all shake hands³⁴) and say *Nyèmè de u shere* (May God fulfil your desires).

21. *Selection and Installation of A New Imam*

A new Imam is always selected by a number of learned Muslims who would be eligible for the office themselves on the grounds of their knowledge, but who do not wish to fulfil it. They evaluate the candidates on four points:

– In a physical and mental sense, the candidate should not have any shortcomings. A man with one eye or one ear or who is lacking a finger or toe cannot become an Imam.

– The candidate has to have a thorough knowledge of the Koran and the Koran commentaries. It is not necessary for the candidate to pass any semblance of an

³⁴) Vincent Monteil, *L'Islam Noir*, p. 123, note 4, 'In northern Nigeria, the believers all shake hands after the Friday services. The purpose of this 'orgy' of shaking hands is to circulate the *baraka* developed by the prayer.' (quotation taken by Monteil from *Hiskett Bouaké*, 1963).

examination because everyone knows exactly what level of knowledge the other Muslims have attained as a result of their experiences on various occasions when learned Muslims try to outdo each other, as on the 27th night of Ramadan.

– The candidate should be a man of mercy and charity.

– The candidate should have four important qualities, or perhaps it is simpler to say there are four qualities he should not have:

he should not be a man of excessive pride;

he should not be a man of greed;

he should not be a woman-chaser because an Imam who commits adultery could never reproach or condemn others for it;

he should not be a secret drinker.

A candidate who is perhaps not very learned but who has an impeccable character is preferable to more intelligent candidates of greater knowledge whose character might leave something to be desired. In matters of learning, an Imam can always consult other men; character is more important than learning.

The *karamom* choose a suitable candidate from among their own ranks and present him to the *donzom* and to the paramount chief, who then accepts their decision. If the *karamom* can not arrive at a decision among themselves, they consult the paramount chief, who inquires about the above-mentioned qualities of the candidates before making the final decision. Al-hadji Mikaila of the Kambaya house commented that, 'Nowadays an Imam has to be extremely intelligent and wellversed in the Koran, because otherwise he will be mocked by others who are better'.

An Imam is appointed for life. It is out of the question for a *donzo* to become an Imam. A *donzo* might be a holy man, but if the position of paramount chief is vacant he will aspire to it. Furthermore a *donzo* knows that he would not earn anything as an Imam, but that being paramount chief would make him rich.

The installation of the Imam is conducted by the men of the Gadyura house, and the *donzom* have adopted the same ceremony for the installation of the paramount chiefs. Before the installation, the new Imam performs a major ablution, then the head of the Gayura lineage washes him as follows:

– the right hand three times;

– the left hand three times;

– the back three times;

– the chest three times.

Then he dresses him in a pair of trousers and a loose upper garment, both completely white. The new Imam performs another ablution, a minor one this

time, puts on a small cap and recites a prayer. Then he enters a dark hut where he must choose between two staffs, using only his sense of touch. They are the staffs that belonged to the first two Imams of N'zara: Gazama, who was the first, and Amadu, who was the second. By seeing which staff he has chosen, the Anufom know whether the Imam will be in office for a long time or a short time. Two young men of the Gadyura house are present in the dark hut to see which staff the new Imam touches first (making it impossible for him to then choose the other one). As soon as the Imam has chosen a staff, a lamp is lit. The new Imam is presented with the prayer beads and the animal hide (a common prayer garment among the Anufom) that accompany the particular staff and belong to one of the first two Imams. The new Imam is then told, 'You have chosen the staff of Gazama (or Amadu), be patient.' The staff is used only at the special service after the month of fasting (*Mingari*).

22. *Imam Al-Hadji Sani Abdulaye*

The film is dedicated to al-hadji Sani Abdulaye, the Imam of N'zara from 1929 until his death on August 14, 1970. The filming of most of the scenes would not have been possible without his permission and full co-operation. This co-operation continued after his death, since his sons, his other kinsmen, and the entire Muslim community wished to honour his memory by carrying out his wishes.³⁵) The qualities of his personality and the great length of his period in office (approximately forty-one years, during which there were four different Anufò paramount chiefs) enabled al-hadji Sani Abdulaye to leave such an indelible mark on the entire Muslim community. It was his leadership that stimulated virtually all the *donzom* to convert to Islam in the nineteen thirties and forties. A number of customs that al-hadji Sani Abdulaye viewed as being at variance with the Muslim practices were abolished, such as the annual cattle sacrifice to the Oti River and the aggressive quarrels among the *donzo* leaders at the *Mingari* celebration (end of the month of fasting), which frequently led to outright fighting among the mounted and armed *donzom*. In particular, the paramount chief Na Byema Tabi (?1935-1958) supported al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's efforts at reform by wielding

³⁵) There is a strong belief, even among the Islamized Anufom, that survivors who go against the wishes of a deceased relative will be called to account by the deceased and by their other ancestors, which could mean serious illness or even death. In this connection the Anufom speak of an *ashyèngu dyorè*: judgement (*dyorè* = word/dispute/verdict) under the ground (*ashyè* =ground) by the ancestors, resulting in *samandò* (punishment, curse by one's deceased relatives).

whatever political power he had. Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye could urge the abolition of these customs and label them as being contrary to the principles of Islam, but only the paramount chief had the actual power to act against them.

Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's power lay mainly in the fact that this personal devotion to the cause, his reputation as a Muslim scholar and the example he set, enabled him to convince others of the justness of the path of Islam.³⁶⁾

We only knew al-hadji Sani Abdulaye during the last years of his life (1969-1970), as a very old man whose body was truly exhausted but whose mind was still very active. He not only focused his attention on religious questions but was also intensively involved with social and political goings-on, with disputes and problems in his own family as well as in families with which they had kinship or friendship relations and with the political intrigues affecting the traditional and modern authorities governing N'zara. In his old age, Sani Abdulaye's mastery of the Koran and the Koran commentaries was a tool he used to lead his congregation to the straight path of proper conduct rather than a skill he used to impress and outdo other Koran scholars. We never heard him speak about the events of his life. The information about his life all came from his sons, his friends, and the numerous other people whose lives were intertwined with his. As one of his sons put it, 'During a man's life, you try and get to know his character, but after his death all his qualities are exposed, the good ones and the bad ones'.

Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye was born in about 1873 as the son of Mama Sani, the tenth Imam of N'zara, and a woman of the Gurunsi tribe, a girl who had been captured during a tribal war and was then given by the paramount chief of the Dagomba (?) to Mama Sani for services rendered. Rumour has it that Mama Sani was one of the legendary learned Muslims with a fabulous grasp of the Koran and the Koran commentaries, and equally impressive skills in astrology, medicine and magic, which his sons had not been able to match. In accordance with the tradition of his Dyula family, Sani Abdulaye went into 'business' at a rather young age. He bought cattle and transported them to Atakpamé and Kpalimé in southern Togo or to Kumasi and Accra in southern Ghana in order to sell them there. As a cattle trader, he came into contact with many different Muslim communities, where he studied for varying lengths of time with well-known scholars.

His first teacher was Ali, a blind scholar in Borgu (northern Nigeria) who taught him the *tafsir*.³⁷⁾ He then engaged in further study of the Koran and the Koran commentaries with al-hadji Omoru Karakir, Alassani, Abdulazizi, Natanu (all of whom were presumably Hausa) and Ali Dabòya of the Gònò house in N'zara,

³⁶⁾ *ashiramaya athi* = way/path.

³⁷⁾ The Mande word for *tafsir* (Koran commentaries) is *dyarala*.

the only Anufò among his teachers. This training made al-hadji Sani Abdulaye a renowned Koran scholar. At the time, N'zara was still the old Mango, as the few elderly Anufom who can still remember it refer to it with melancholic regret. There were still learned Muslims of the old school, 'real *karamom*' with knowledge of true greatness. There were about 40 of them in the old Mango, twelve of whom belonged to the Kambaya house, and as a child Sani Abdulaye knew all these elderly learned men.

There was keen competition among the learned *karamom* of the different lineages, which came to a head every year on the night of the *Kurubi* celebration, the night of the 26-27 day of Ramadan, when tradition has it that the Koran was revealed. This was when all the prominent Muslims gathered to take turns reciting and interpreting the Koran, and this was when everyone's skills and shortcomings were exhibited in public.

It so happened that Omoru Korandi, the twelfth Imam of N'zara from the Kambaya house, was a man with a fine character but with very limited knowledge of the Koran. In the Gònò house, however, Koran learning was at a very high level in those days and the Gònò *karamom* had every intention of putting the *karamom* of the Kambaya house to shame at the *Kurubi* celebration with their superior knowledge. The Kambaya elders, who anticipated this calamity, held highly agitated consultations. One of them, Sulemana, proposed summoning Sani Abdulaye, still a relatively young man, from Korbongu to help save the honour of the Kambaya house. 'If you, elders, do not wish to be put to shame, then you must put aside your jealousy of this *karamò* who is so much younger than you,' he said. A young man (al-hadji Mussa of the Mande house, deceased in 1971) was sent to Sani Abdulaye with a letter in which the elders of the Kambaya house begged him, in the name of God and his ancestors, to come to N'zara for the *Kurubi* celebration. In absolute secrecy, Sani Abdulaye arrived in N'zara four days before the *Kurubi* celebration and told the elders of his house, 'Unfortunately I don't know very much; I do know something, but we shall see.'

That same night, he and his mother's brother hid in a dark spot near the Gònò house to eavesdrop and find out how much his opponents knew. Somewhat reassured after learning the level of his rivals' knowledge, he promised his elders that he would enter into competition with the learned men of the Gònò house. But the elders still had their qualms about it, and asked him to demonstrate his skills for the family.

By then it was already the day before the *Kurubi* celebration and tension had risen to unbearable heights. The Kambaya elders gathered to hear what Sani Abdulaye had to say. He had selected a Koranic verse on the Resurrection and dealt with it so extensively that the meeting lasted from nine o'clock in the evening

to three o'clock in the morning, when it had to be interrupted for a meal (during the month of fasting, a meal is served at three o'clock in the morning). The Kambaya elders no longer had any doubts about al-hadji Sani Abdulaye. Meanwhile, no one outside the family knew that al-hadji Sani Abdulaye was in N'zara. When the moment came to accompany the Imam to the paramount chief, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye simply joined the crowd. The *karamom* of the Gònò house approached the paramount chief with an air of certain victory. Among their ranks was Ali Dabòya, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's former teacher, who had no idea that his ex-pupil was so nearby.

After everyone was seated, the Imam asked the paramount chief for permission to speak and then cited the Koranic verse about the Resurrection that al-hadji Sani Abdulaye had interpreted for his family the night before. Mocking laughter broke out among the members of the Gònò house, whereupon the Imam raised his voice and said, 'What are you laughing at, at me? Thank God I have got someone here who can save me from your mockery.' He called al-hadji Sani Abdulaye to come forward and said to him, 'Here, take the Koran and go ahead, now it is a matter between you and any man here who thinks he is a real *karamò*.'

Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye asked his mother's brother Buraïma to do the reciting (it is common practice for one man to recite in Arabic and for another to do the explaining), and then started to interpret the text. The interpretation of the first sentence, *amma yantasaluna*, took about two hours. All the *karamom* at the ceremony gathered closer around Sani Abdulaye and the Imam himself stood up and, leaning on his cane, began to cool al-hadji Sani Abdulaye with his fan. He was cheered on by the entire audience and the *karamom* from the Gònò house bowed their heads in shame.

Ever since that night, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye had had the nickname *Yantasaluna*, named after this particular verse of the Koran. He returned to Korbongu to go on as a trader.

When Imam Omoru Korandi died many years later, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye had just completed the arrangements for his pilgrimage to Mecca. Two candidates had come forward in the Kambaya house, but the elders did not want to again appoint someone whose knowledge of the Koran was inadequate. Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye was summoned to N'zara. The Kambaya elders, joined by Issifu Nana, the Anufò paramount chief, all asked al-hadji Sani Abdulaye to become a candidate for the function of Imam, and to postpone his pilgrimage to Mecca.

On the day when the new Imam was to be selected, the paramount chief presented the four candidates – one *karamò* from the Gònò house, two from the Shirabu house and one from the Karamò house in the Fòmboro ward – to the

French district officer with the words, 'These four candidates don't know anything about the Koran.' The candidates responded, 'We might not know anything, but we still know more than the paramount chief.' The paramount chief, however, had an answer to this, 'Officer, I have another candidate whom I would like to have appointed as Imam.' He introduced al-hadji Sani Abdulaye to the French district officer, who asked him, 'Are you a *karamò*?' I am a *karamò-ba*. ('*ba* = child) al-hadji Sani Abdulaye answered. The district officer posed the same question to the other candidates, who all answered, 'Yes, I am a *karamò*.' Again, the French district officer asked, 'What are you?' Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye said 'I am a pupil' and the others all said, 'I am a learned Muslim.' Then the district officer shook the paramount chief's hand and said, 'Congratulations, your *karamò* is a real *karamò*.'

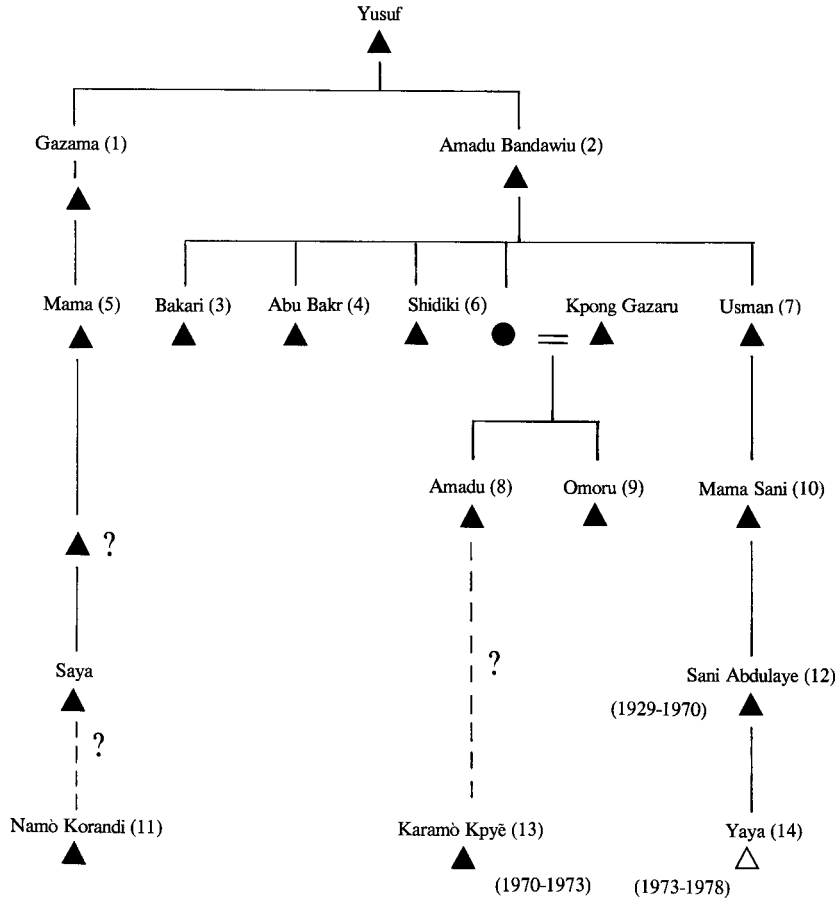
The French district officer didn't know Arabic, but he did have a French translation of the *tafsir*. He opened it and asked al-hadji Sani Abdulaye several questions, which he answered with the greatest of ease. The French district officer said to the Anufò paramount chief, 'This is your new Imam.' Al-hadji Sani Abdulaye was escorted home in triumph and a communal *adua* was recited for him.

When he was installed as Imam, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye made three promises to the Muslims of N'zara:

- that no enemies would conquer the town of N'zara during his lifetime;
- that there would be no epidemics, famines or droughts in N'zara during his lifetime;
- that if ever the Kambaya house was attacked – whether it was an armed attack or any other kind of attack – he would defend it to his very last breath.

And in al-hadji Sani Abdulaye's lifetime, none of these calamities befell his congregation.

The Imams of the Kambaya House in N'zara



Kambaya Shira Nnyò: 'at the two monkeybread fruit trees'

Kambaya Sulenu: 'at the termite hill'

Kambaya Imam deka

○ : woman

△ : man (black: deceased)

≡ : marriage

23. The Genealogy of the Imams of N'zara

As a rule, the Imams of N'zara have belonged to the Kambaya patrilineage (*awuru*). Twice, during times of political upheaval, there were Imams from a different lineage, though this did not disprove the rule that they should come from the Kambaya house. The Imams are selected on the grounds of their knowledge and character, not on the grounds of their kinship relations to the previous Imam.

The Kambaya patrilineage traces its origins back to two brothers, Gazama and Amadu Bandawiu. They were the sons of Yusuf, who stayed behind in the Ivory Coast. The patrilineage is part of a large patriclan of Dyula origin, which is sometimes called by such names as Kamaghate, Kama-atay, Jabakte or Kambakatui. In N'zara, the lineage consists of three subsections: the Kambaya of the 'two baobabs' (Kambaya Shira Nnyò), descended from Gazama, the first Imam of N'zara; the Kambaya at the 'termite hill' (Kambaya Sulenu), descended from a daughter of Amadu Bandawiu who, for lack of a local learned Muslim as eligible partner in wedlock, married a distant relative from the town of Kong; and the Kambaya descended from Usman, Amadu Bandawiu's son, the segment (Kambaya Imamdeka) to which Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye belonged.

24. *Muslims in Mango:* *Film Commentary*

Sansanné-Mango,³⁸⁾ usually called Mango, lies in northern Togo. Its population of approximately 10,000 consists mainly of Anufom, many of whom are Muslims.

The town is situated on the Oti, a tributary of the Volta River.

It is the Tyokossi³⁹⁾ who call themselves Anufom, meaning people from Anò, the region in the Ivory Coast where they originally came from.

More than two centuries ago, several princes left Anò with a small band of warriors.

After many wanderings and numerous successful military escapades, the Anufom came to northern Togo and settled there in the territory they had conquered.

The history of the roundabout migration from the Ivory Coast to Mango has been recorded by Muslims of Dyula origin from Mali.

They assisted the Anufom in their military campaigns with their knowledge of astrology and magic.

The old documents are still in the possession of several Muslim families in Sansanné-Mango.

Adamu and his older brother have one of these documents in their custody.

Adamu reads the text aloud in Arabic, and his brother translates it, sentence for sentence, into Anufò.

The reciting of this document, which tells the history of their forefathers, strengthens the Anufom's ties with the past, which is of great importance to them.

Initially, the only Anufom to profess the Islamic faith were the Muslim families of Dyula origin.

It was not until the beginning of the twentieth century that Sani Abdulaye, the Imam of Sansanné-Mango, converted the Anufò paramount chief and his family to Islam; the other families of noble standing were soon to follow suit.

The number of converts among the commoners increased steadily, and today

³⁸⁾ In the original sound track of the film, the name Sansanné-Mango, which is the official name of the town of N'zara, is used.

³⁹⁾ The administration and other surrounding peoples call the Anufom: Tyokossi.

most of the Anufom of Sansanné-Mango are Muslims, although Islam is still of negligible significance in the surrounding rural areas.

The influence of Islam has penetrated many aspects of daily life, but has only partially replaced the original African ideas and customs, and in many cases there has been a blending of Muslim and African cultural elements.

Outside her home, a married Muslim woman wears a veil covering her head and shoulders.

It might look like more of a decoration than a covering, but a married Muslim woman who goes out without one of these veils will be seriously reproached by her husband and other male relatives.

The men wear long, loose Arab-style robes and small caps.

The garment worn for Friday services at the mosque are generally white.

In the otherwise non-literate culture of the Anufom, knowledge of Arabic is of essential importance for the study and spread of Islam.

At the Koran School, children learn to read and write Arabic.

Boys who make mistakes are punished . . . the taps on the head embarrass this boy in front of his classmates.

Once a pupil has learned the alphabet and can read words, he starts to recite the Koran and learn the verses by heart.

He does not have to understand what they mean, that comes later.

Many pupils never get past the stage of reading the Koran verses without understanding them.

If the teacher leaves, the older and more advanced pupils take over.

If the situation calls for it, they can be very strict indeed.

Koran classes are held in the homes of prominent Muslim families, usually early in the morning or after four in the afternoon.

Very few Muslims in Sansanné-Mango devote themselves to truly intensive study of the Koran and the Koran commentaries.

The ones who do meet about once a week and read several verses of the Koran together.

One of them recites the Arabic text, another simultaneously explains certain words and sentences.

These explanations are in Mande, the old language of the Muslim scholars, which is still used by these Dyula families to explain the Koran texts.

Each of these men, who are all sons of Imam al-hadji Sani Abdulaye, has already made a pilgrimage to Mecca, where they saw how the study of Islam is practiced in the Arab world.

In addition to the study of the Koran and the Koran commentaries, there are also Muslims in the Anufom society who are skilled in magic and astrology.

A horoscope is drawn by writing in a thin layer of clean river sand.

Only very few Muslims are sufficiently trained in astrology to be able to carry

out the complicated processes required for drawing up a horoscope.

This type of fortune-telling is not only in great demand, it is also very lucrative.

First, the astrologer writes the names of the five prophets in the sand – Mohammed, Jesus, Moses, Abraham and Noah – and summons their aid.

While the astrologer speaks the names of the prophets in Arabic, he writes the numbers in the sand that can replace the letters according to the *hisāb*, the Arabic practice of substituting numbers for letters.

It is so complicated that he has to keep consulting the handbooks.

What is the client's problem?

He is in love with a woman and wants to know whether she is in love with him.

The astrologer is quite familiar with the kinds of problems his clients are likely to be faced with.

He starts with the woman's name, Asanatu.

Then the numbers that stand for the letters of her name.

Then the name of the client, Alassani, first in letters and then in numbers.

The numbers that replace the letters are the starting point for various calculations, the numbers are then added and multiplied.

The final results and the way they are interpreted are closely linked to the position of the stars and planets at the moment, and the stars under which the client was born.

The client's prospects are favourable.

The woman will be his in the end, that much is certain, but there are certain obstacles that will have to be surmounted and the client receives detailed instructions as to how to achieve his goal.

Consulting an astrologer is quite expensive and not everyone can afford it.

A cheaper and very common alternative are the magic charms using written Koran texts.

Almost every learned Muslim has a number of suitable texts to meet the most common needs.

This schoolboy has to take an examination soon and wants to make sure that he will pass.

The selected text is copied onto both sides of a smooth black writing tablet.

Then it is washed off with water.

This liquid, now containing the power of the text, is first used to wet the head and face.

The client drinks the rest of the mixture.

The same text is copied again on a piece of paper.

The paper is folded into a square wad and tied up with cotton thread.

This amulet is worn on the body.

The same text is written down again, washed off and mixed with a few grains of mascara.

The grains, now containing the power of the text, are finely ground.

This common cosmetic is applied to the eyelids, granting the client the power of the text.

Special Arabic texts are used for reciting prayers for the deceased.

This ceremony, whose purpose is to liberate the spirit of the deceased, is held on the third, the seventh and the twelfth day after death.

The immediate family and relatives of the deceased gather together and say a prayer, the *adua*, led by the Imam.

The recitation of the prayers alternates with the recitation of the *Fatihā*, a verse from the Koran.

Everyone who has participated in the service receives a few coins from the immediate family as a token of their gratitude.

The ceremony closes with a final recitation of the *Fatihā*.

After the service, a meal of rice balls and meat sauce is served.

The head of the family supervises the distribution of the portions and makes sure the most prominent guests get the best pieces of meat.

The ritual prayer, the *ṣalāt*, is one of the five pillars of Islam.

Every Muslim is required to perform this prayer five times a day.

Once a week, on Friday afternoon, prayers are performed by the entire Muslim congregation in the mosque.

It is a simple building with the essential features of a mosque.

The *mihrab*, a semi-circular niche pointing in the direction of Mecca, is reserved for the Imam when he leads the prayer.

The Imam uses the *minbar*, a seat at the top of steps placed to the right of the *mihrab*, as a pulpit for the Friday services.

At twelve o'clock noon, the muezzin stands in front of the *mihrab*, facing Mecca, and summons the believers as follows:

- God is the Greatest (four times);
- I proclaim that there is no God but God (twice);
- I proclaim that Mohammed is his Prophet (twice);
- Hurry to prayer (twice);
- Hurry to salvation (twice);
- God is the Greatest (twice);
- There is no God but God.

After the call to worship, the muezzin starts to walk around the mosque, chanting special Koranic texts.

Everyone who comes to the mosque has some small change for the muezzin.

First the muezzin walks along the southern side.

In the rear of the mosque on the western side, there is a separate section for women.

Only elderly women who no longer menstruate are allowed to come and pray in the mosque.

Except for the muezzin, no man is permitted to come here.

At the entrance to the women's section, the muezzin turns back the way he came.

He continues to make this round until the last call to prayer a few minutes before one o'clock.

The women avoid contact with the muezzin's hands, since local tradition has it that this would destroy the ritual purity of both.

Giving alms on Friday is considered to be a good deed.

Whoever wants to pray must be in a state of ritual purity.

Every Muslim performs the prescribed ablutions beforehand.

Most of them do it at home.

This boy is performing a minor ablution next to the mosque before going to pray.

The sequence is as follows: first the hands, then the mouth and the ears because of the dirt that has been spoken and heard, then the nose and the face, the arms up to the elbows, the hair and lastly the feet.

Before praying, the believer must take off his shoes and cover his head.

This mosque has become too small to accommodate all the Muslims of Mango.

Many of the believers have to worship outdoors.

Before the Friday service starts, the believers perform a prayer, which is viewed as extremely meritorious.

Several young men accompany the Imam to the mosque, chanting as they walk.

For almost forty years, al-hadji Sani Abdulaye led the Friday services of the Muslim congregation every week.

When everyone has arrived, the muezzin proclaims the last call to prayer at a few minutes to one.

The Friday sermon, the *khutbah*, is a text recited by the Imam with good advice and exhortations to the believers; a different text is recited each week.

The paramount chief of the Anufom occupies the spot that is reserved only just for him, straight across from the Imam.

After the recitation, the Imam turns to face Mecca and leads the believers in prayers.

First, each believer pronounced the intention to perform the prayer, and from that moment on he is in sacred isolation where nothing can keep him from total worship of God.

The *ṣalāt* is purely and simply a prescribed expression of respect and gratitude to the only God who had created the world.

In the various positions, the texts which express this gratitude are recited.

At the end of the *ṣalāt*, evil is averted with this gesture of the hand and a text recited simultaneously.

At the end of the service, the believer greets the people to his left and to his right.

One by one, the three times thirty-three beads are shifted, while the three different praises to God are each recited thirty-three times:

God be praised

Praise to God

God is the greatest.

After the *ṣalāt* and the praises, the *adua* is recited. It is a prayer in which the Imam asks – not in Arabic but in Anufò – for health and prosperity for the believers and their families.

This prayer is alternated with the recitation of a verse from the Koran, the *Fatihā*, accompanied by gestures of the hands; everyone knows them, but no one can say for sure just exactly what they mean.

In the rear section of the mosque, even though they are separated from the men by a partition, the old women can still hear the whole service . . .

. . . the ritual prayer, the *ṣalāt* . . .

. . . the praises to God . . .

. . . and the *adua*, the closing prayer of the Friday service.

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Technical Information

The 16 mm. material was filmed with a Paillard-Bolex H. 16 reflex camera equipped with the lenses: Switar $f = 16$ mm; $f = 25$ mm; $f = 75$ mm. The black and white material consisted of Kodak Plus X negative (80 Asa) and Kodak 4-X negative (500 Asa). A total of 45 rolls of film were taken, each 30 meters. The length of the final version of the film is 35 minutes (24 b/sec.). The sound was recorded with a UHER 4000 Report tape recorder.

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