The Kamite Stands

The gesture, the word and the proof —
the Books of Lassa, the Declarations and the Seal
Fifteen writings

COMPLETE EDITION

Solemn writings of the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Kamites

Abidjan, 2026 — year 6263 of the Kamite era

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The fifteen writings gathered in this volume first appeared separately in Abidjan, between September 4 and September 19, 2026: *The Threshold*, *The Libation* and *The Baobab* (September 4); *The Sacred Wood* (September 5); *The Kamite of Tomorrow* (September 6); *The Fourth Jihad* (September 7); *Our Parents' Work* (September 12); *The Kamite Position*, *Kamite, Who Are You?*, *The Kamites Before the Revealed Religions*, *Judging Without Prison*, *Kamite, Come Back to the Fold* and *Kamite, Your Neighbour Is Your Brother* (September 13); *The Seal* (September 18); *The Key of the Kamite* (September 19). Each of these texts was electronically signed and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain on the very day of its publication; the certificates are published with them.

The volume is ordered in three movements: *the Gesture*, which carries the Books of Lassa (chapters I to V); *the Word*, which carries the Declarations (VI to XII and XIV); *the Proof*, which carries the two acts of the Seal (XV and XVI). The word "part" is not used here: several of the declarations gathered carry divisions of their own so named, and two numberings that resemble each other mislead the reader.

The chapters are numbered I to XII, then XIV, XV and XVI: this book has no thirteenth chapter.

From Sounlé to KING BAZURU is not in this volume. The story of one man stands alone: it adds itself neither to the books of initiation, nor to the declarations, nor to the acts.

This volume follows *The Awakening of Kamite Consciousness*, which gathered the first twelve writings (May 27 – June 12, 2026), and *The Kamite House*, which gathered fourteen and a call (August 21 – September 12, 2026). English edition of *Le Kamite debout*.

Text by KING BAZURU, Venerable and President of the Kamites.

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Preliminary Note

This book gathers, in a single volume and in their order of reading, the fifteen writings I made public in Abidjan between September 4 and September 19, 2026. It is the third volume. The first, *The Awakening of Kamite Consciousness*, awakened: it unveiled the meaning of our marks, defended our spiritualities, took apart the machinery of erasure, and showed, writing after writing, that every thing we had been told was primitive was a great thing, and an inconvenient one. The second, *The Kamite House*, built: it gave the people back its feasts, its calendar, its door, its tongue, its queen mothers and its land. This one sets upright. And one does not stand by will alone: three things are needed, and this volume gives them one after the other — a gesture, a word, a proof.

The gesture first, for a man who leaves a prayer without receiving another does not last a month. The *first movement*, *the Gesture*, gathers the five **Books of Lassa**. *The Threshold* gives the apprentice what he believes, what he does each day, what he does not do, and how he enters. *The Libation* gives the Kamite, after the passage of twelve moons, the right to pour and the word to the Ancestors. *The Baobab* gives the sage the sanctuary, the full-moon rite, and the charge one receives and does not take. *The Sacred Wood* says where all this comes from: the country, the neighbours, and the three ceremonies that make a man. *The Kamite of Tomorrow* looks at the age to come and at the child growing up beside the machine. Five books: a liturgy, and the country that carries it.

The word next, for a man who has a rite but no answer still lowers his eyes. The *second movement*, *the Word*, gathers eight **declarations**,

all made within ten days, and all on questions that can no longer be put off: the blade that returns a fourth time and the ordered retreat; our parents' work and the engineer who goes ahead; the right of Kamite peoples to set their own priorities and the dead one does not compare; what Kamitism is, which is not a religion but a federation of spiritualities; our place among the revealed religions, at home and in the diaspora; the justice that was rendered without a single wall; the welcome of those who return; and the palaver between our States, which no one will hold in our stead.

The proof last, for a word that can be dated after the fact is worth nothing before a court, nor before history. The *third movement*, *the Proof,* carries the two acts of the **seal**. *The Seal* institutes: the register, the identifier, Kamite timestamping, the three levels, and the rule I hold to be the most important in this volume — at the Kamite level, only the fingerprint leaves, and the hand belongs to the one who bears it. *The Key of the Kamite* applies: how one makes his key from twenty-four words and a name he tells no one, how he keeps it, how he renews it during the five days outside time, how he replaces it when it is lost. It is the one place in our writings where the theory and the hand touch.

Let the numbering be noticed, for it is not a distraction: the chapters run from I to XII, then XIV, XV and XVI. Fifteen chapters, and no thirteenth. It is with this book as it was with the house: we do not count that room.

One writing of the same period is not here, and I want to say why. *From Sounlé to KING BAZURU* tells the road of one man: from a child of a village of the Bwa country to the charge he bears today. That story stands alone. It instructs no apprentice, it declares

nothing in the name of the people, it institutes no register. To bring it in would have mixed the man with the charge, and that is precisely what our Ancestors taught us not to do.

These pages express my position as Venerable and President of the Kamites — and, where it is needed, as an engineer and an expert before the courts. Several of them do not propose: they institute, according to our own teachings — stages, exact words, witnesses, and the final writing of the seal. Each was signed and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain on the day of its publication, so that no one may say it was written afterwards; and the last of these writings teaches the reader to do the same, for himself, without asking our permission.

This book criticises doctrines, systems and postures — never persons, never a people, never a faith. Christians, Muslims and keepers of the traditions live side by side in our own families, often under the same roof; respect for believers does not forbid the examination of ideas — it requires it. And nothing instituted here is imposed on anyone: freedom of conscience remains entire, there is neither anathema nor exclusion, and one leaves as one entered.

As always, I do not ask to be believed on my word: the general bibliography, at the end of the volume, gathers chapter by chapter the references each reader can verify for himself — and, for the two acts of the seal, the public standards and the computations that can be redone without us. I invite researchers, historians, jurists, engineers, descendants of the diaspora and every person concerned to confront this text with their sources, to contest it, to complete it.

The people was awakened. The house was built. What remained was to stand.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

FIRST MOVEMENT

The Gesture

The Books of Lassa — the five degrees and the country: from the threshold to the age to come

— Chapter One —

The Threshold

Book of the Apprentice — first of the Three Books of Lassa, for the one who hesitates at the threshold of Kamitism: what he believes, what he does each day, each moon and each year, and how he enters

Book of initiation instituted by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 4, 2026

Sanctuary of Lassa
year 6263 of the Kamite era

Preliminary Note

This book is the first of three. It is addressed to the one who hesitates: who has read our writings, who knows that what we say is true — and who, when Friday or Sunday comes, goes back to his prayer, because he does not know what to replace it with. I came to understand, with time, that the word does not heal alone: beside it there must be something serious and regular, which holds the place of what one leaves. We are reproached with having no holy book; we would soon be reproached with having no liturgy. This book answers both.

I say it with the plainness this series has always had: this book did not fall from the sky. God will send us neither book nor liturgy; He gave us Ancestors, a register, a land, and men to write. A man wrote it, in his name, under his seal, at a verifiable date — and a book whose author is known is worth more than a book whose origin must be believed. What is secret in our sanctuaries is not in it: the secret is passed on under the tree, from mouth to ear, as it always has been. This book contains everything that is said before all.

Three books, three degrees. This one is the book of the Threshold, for the apprentice: what we believe, what we do each day, each moon and each year, and how one enters. The second, "The Libation," is the book of the Kamite: it gives the rites of life and the right to pour for one's house. The third, "The Baobab," is the book of the Sage: the charge of the sanctuary, of the sacrifice and of the register. They are read in order. Nothing in them is imposed: this book offers a door, and describes it exactly.

I. Opening: the Missed Prayer

Look at a man raised in a prayer at a fixed hour, on the day he has missed it: he is not at ease. For the rest of his day, everything that happens to him — a delay, a quarrel, a lost coin — he reads in the light of that missed prayer, and he is not at ease all week. I do not say this to laugh. I say it because it is the knot of everything, and it must be looked at squarely before a single line of liturgy is written.

These men have seen. They have read our writings, they have heard the truth, they know that what we say is true — and they go on with their prayer. It is not that they do not believe what we say: it is that they are attached to the prayer as one is attached to a hand that has held you. Wherever slavery lasted, men born under a master have been seen to pity those who had none: they had never seen what a free man looks like. Our brothers are like this before Kamitism: they see a truth without a timetable, a faith without genuflections, and they see a void in it. It is not the truth they lack. It is the gesture.

I understood that things cannot be left like this. A true word that offers no gesture leaves a man in his old habit, and habit always wins against the idea. So this book gives the gesture: a gesture at dawn and a gesture at evening, every day; a cult at every full moon, bare-chested, before the earth; five days a year, outside time. A complete rhythm, serious, regular — which can be kept in a village, in a flat in Abidjan or in a room in Paris — and which does not replace another's prayer with yet another's prayer, but with the gesture of the free man: to pour to the earth, to name one's own, to count one's day, and to say one's name.

To the one who hesitates at the threshold, I therefore say: you are not going towards the void. You are going towards an order. Read this book to the end, and you will know exactly what you will do tomorrow morning.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

II. What We Believe: the Seven Words

Before the gesture, the belief, for one does not pour to the earth without knowing why. The house of the Bwa Sacré holds in seven words, which the apprentice learns by heart, and which he will be able to say to whoever asks him what he believes. Here they are, then their explanation.

> The seven words
>
> *One. There is one Creator, who made all things, and of whom no one has made an image.*
>
> *Two. The Ancestors are alive before Him; they intercede for us, and we do not worship them.*
>
> *Three. The earth receives what we pour: the water that purifies, the milk that nourishes, the alcohol that gladdens.*
>
> *Four. The name is the register: a man is worth what is said of his name when he is not there.*
>
> *Five. Time is counted from our fathers of Egypt; we know how to say the year we are in, and the five days outside time are ours.*
>
> *Six. Freedom of conscience is entire; no one is compelled, no one is cursed, no one is excluded.*
>
> *Seven. Nothing that is secret is written; everything that is written is true, dated and sealed.*

One Creator. Our ancestors were not polytheists, whatever has been written about them: they knew the one Creator, so great that no house was built for Him and His name was not uttered lightly, and they addressed Him through those who had already passed before Him. The Kamite makes no image of God, lends Him no face, and does not claim to know what He thinks: he knows that He is, that He has made, and that He watches. Other houses of the federation name several powers: they are our own, and this book speaks only for the house of the Bwa Sacré.

The Ancestors intercede. Those who have gone have not gone: they are before the Creator, and they carry our name. We do not worship them – that would be to insult them, for they know better than we do who God is – we name them, we feed them with what we pour, we ask them to carry our requests. This is what the world calls intercessors, and there is nothing in it to frighten one who comes from a religion where saints are prayed to.

The earth receives. We do not pour into a vessel: we pour on the earth, because the earth is the body of the Ancestors and nothing given to it is lost. Three liquids, in this order: water, which is life and purification, the first thing offered to whoever arrives; milk, which is the mother, nourishment, the lineage – the first worker; alcohol, which is fire, speech and the joy of the feast, the dolo of our taverns. He who does not drink alcohol pours it all the same: one does not drink it, one gives it.

The name is the register. We showed in "The Invisible Ledger" that our villages kept a register without paper: what is said of each name, under the tree, when he is not there. That is where our salvation is played out, and not in a bookkeeping of genuflections: the Kamite lives so that his name can be said aloud. This rule is more demanding than a prayer, and it cannot be missed at the hour: it is kept all one's life.

Time is ours. "The Kamite Pilgrimage" fixed the reference: the first year is that of the calendar of our fathers of Egypt, as the Kamite tradition has fixed it, and one adds 4236 to the Gregorian year until July 25, 4237 from July 26. We are in 6263. The five days from July 21 to 25 are outside time, and all the Kamites of the world keep them together.

Freedom is entire. There is in Kamitism no holy war, no anathema, no hell for the one who leaves. He who enters enters free; he who leaves leaves free; he who keeps another faith alongside is not driven out. We institute by palaver and by example, and what is useful imposes itself alone.

Nothing secret is written. Our sanctuaries have secrets — "The Price of Silence" said why — and these secrets are in no book: they are received under the tree, at their hour, from the mouth of a sage. But everything the Kamite does before all is written here, hiding nothing, and everything written here is dated and sealed. That is our answer to those who reproach us with having no book: we have a register, and we know who wrote it.

III. What One Leaves, What One Keeps

One must speak to the one who hesitates about what he fears, for he does not fear what people think.

He fears first the void of the hour. He is used to being told when to rise, when to bow, when to eat and when to fast, and he thinks that a faith without a timetable is a faith without seriousness. This book gives him a timetable, and he will see that it is more regular than the one he leaves: the day, the moon, the year — dawn and evening, the full moon, the five days. The moon cannot be missed: it is in the sky, and everyone sees it.

He fears next the punishment. He was taught that an accountant God keeps the count of his prayers and that every failing is paid for. Let him hear this, which is the heart of the threshold: the Creator

keeps no accounts. The Kamite who misses a full moon is not punished: he is absent from the register of that moon, and he comes back at the next. What happens to him afterwards does not come from a missed moon: it comes from life, which happens to everyone. It takes months to unlearn fear; this book is patient.

He fears his family. His mother prays, his father prays, his brothers pray, and he is afraid of being the one who betrayed. Let him know that Kamitism does not ask him to break: it asks him neither to spit on the mosque nor to burn the church. It asks him to go home — to the Ancestors of his own mother, of whom the mosque and the church are recent tenants. He may accompany his mother to prayer out of respect, as one accompanies a guest; he will pray there with her if he wishes, and no one will reproach him for it. And one day, it is she who will ask him to pour for her.

He fears witchcraft. He was taught that what we do — pouring, sacrificing, naming the dead — is the devil's work. We answered in "The Devil Always Wears Our Face": that devil was painted by those who wanted our lands. There is nothing hidden in what this book describes: water, milk, alcohol, a piece of earth, names, and a request made aloud before all. He who finds witchcraft in that has not looked at what we do: water, milk, alcohol, a piece of earth, names.

And he fears blood. He has heard of chickens, goats, oxen, and he imagines scenes. Let him hold on to this from now: the apprentice never sacrifices. He pours. Sacrifice is the business of those who have a sanctuary and a sacrificer; it is done to ask a favour, the animal is eaten by all and nothing is lost or sold. The sacrificial

chicken dies more cleanly than the one at the market, and it is named.

That is what he leaves: another's hour, the fear of the count, the label of traitor, the painted devil, and the image of blood. That is what he keeps: his mother, his name, his dead, his land, and God — who was there before the Books, and who will remain after them.

IV. The Day: the Word of Dawn and the Account of Evening

Here is the daily gesture, and it is twofold: a word on rising, an account on lying down. It requires neither mat, nor ablution, nor orientation: it requires water, a little earth, and two minutes.

The earth of the sanctuary

He who lives near his sanctuary or his village pours on the bare ground, before his door or at the foot of a tree. He who lives in town, on an upper floor, or on the other side of the water, keeps at home an earth of the sanctuary: a handful of earth taken at Lassa, or in the village of his fathers, or at the foot of the tree where someone poured for him the first time, placed in an earthenware vessel, without a lid, set on the floor in a corner of the house. That is where he pours. This earth is not a sacred object: it is a piece of the sanctuary that travels with him, and at each return to the village he gives it back to the ground and takes another. The sanctuary is portable; we wrote it in "The Kamite Pilgrimage."

The word of dawn

On rising, before speaking to anyone, standing before the earth, bare-chested if he is at home, the apprentice takes water in his right hand and lets it fall on the earth, saying:

> Standing, facing the earth. Water in the right hand.
>
> *Creator of all things, You who made the day, I rise in the day You made.*
>
> *Ancestors of my lineage – here he names his father, his father's father, and his mother's mother –, here is water. I rise with my name. Carry it before Him.*
>
> *May what I do today be fit to be said aloud.*
>
> *Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.*

That is all. Four sentences, a handful of water. The apprentice who does not yet know the name of his father's father says "those whose name I bear," and goes to ask his mother that very day: the word of dawn is also the way one rebuilds one's lineage, one name at a time.

The account of evening

On lying down, before sleeping, sitting or standing before the earth, without water this time, the apprentice says his account – in a low voice if he is not alone, but in a real voice, for an account that is only thought is not an account that is kept:

> In the evening, before the earth. Without water.
>
> *Here is what I did today. (He says it, in a sentence or two.)*
>
> *Here is to whom I was useful. (He names, or he says: to no one.)*
>
> *Here is what I owe, and to whom. (He names the debt, the apology, the word not kept.)*
>
> *Ancestors, it is entered. I will sleep with my name.*
>
> *Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.*

Let one measure what this account does, for it is the greatest difference between what the apprentice leaves and what he finds. Another's prayer asked him to repeat given words; the account of evening asks him to say what he did. The first could be missed; the second cannot be missed: it is said true or it is said false, and the man who lies to himself in the evening before his Ancestors knows it. In a year of evening accounts, a man changes more than in ten years of repeated prayers, because no one asked him to repeat: he was asked to look.

The greeting

Kamites greet one another with one word, the same in all languages, which comes from our fathers of Egypt and means peace: *Hotep*. It is said while holding out the open right hand, palm upward, and the answer is *Hotep*. Between members of the same sanctuary, the name is added: "Hotep, son of So-and-so" – for one greets a name, not a face.

V. The Moon: the Common Cult of the Full Moon

Here is the centre of everything, what holds, for the Kamite, the place that others give to mass or to Friday prayer: the common cult of the full moon. Each month, on the night the moon is full, all the members of the Bwa Sacré, wherever they are in the world, pour a libation to the Ancestors — at the least water, milk and alcohol, poured on the earth — and those who have a sanctuary add a sacrifice to it. The sanctuary of Lassa holds this cult under its tree; the hour and the way are learned from the jatigi, and the days from the calendar kept by the Bwa Sacré software, not from a book. Those who are far away hold it at home, at the same hour, before the earth of the sanctuary.

Why the full moon

Because it is in the sky and no one can mistake the day; because it is the same for all the Kamites of the world to within a few hours; because our ancestors counted by it; and because it lights the circle without a lamp. The cult is held on the evening of the date of the full moon, at nightfall, at the hour of Abidjan and Bamako, which is the hour of the Greenwich meridian; those in Paris, Montreal or Bahia hold it on the same date, when evening comes where they are. The calendar of the year's full moons is given in chapter VIII; those that follow, the sages publish each year.

The dress

Those who take part in the cult, and first of all the one who pours and the one who sacrifices, are bare-chested. This is not an oddity: it is a protocol. Before the Ancestors one wears neither the master's garment, nor the garment of rank, nor anything that hides the mark, the scar or the skin; one comes as one was born, the lower body covered with a wrapper or simple trousers. Women keep the wrapper tied at the breast if they wish: the rule is that one does not come dressed from outside, not that one undresses. The feet are bare on the earth.

What one brings

Each brings the three liquids, in three vessels of earthenware or calabash: clear water; milk — of cow, of goat, or failing that the milk one has; and alcohol — dolo, palm wine, or the alcohol one has. Those who have a sanctuary bring, if they make a sacrifice, the animal alive and healthy. No one brings money: nothing is paid at the cult of the full moon, and no one takes up a collection there.

The order of the cult for the apprentice

The complete cult, with the words of the sacrificer and the protocol of the sacrifice, is given in the third book, for it is the charge of the sage. The apprentice needs to know what he himself does, and here is his part, in order.

> 1. The arrival. One arrives before nightfall. One takes off one's shoes and removes one's upper garment on entering the enclosure. One greets: *Hotep*. One takes one's place in a circle

around the tree, or around the earth. No one enters the enclosure armed, neither he nor those who accompany him. The only knife is the sacrificer's, and it serves for that alone.

2. Water on the hands. The sage, or the eldest, pours water on the hands of each, who rubs them and shakes them towards the ground. No one speaks.

3. The call to the Creator. The sage says the call. The assembly answers:

— *He is, He has made, He watches.*

4. The call to the Ancestors. The sage names the Ancestors of the sanctuary. Then each, in turn, in the circle, says his name and his father's, and names an Ancestor of his lineage. The assembly answers after each:

— *He is named.*

5. The libation. Each, in turn, comes forward to the earth, crouches, and pours the three liquids, one after the other, saying:

Here is water, that you may live. (He pours the water.)

Here is milk, that you may be nourished. (He pours the milk.)

Here is alcohol, that you may rejoice. (He pours the alcohol.)

Ancestors of my lineage, carry my name before Him.

— *It is poured.*

6. The request. He who has a request says it aloud, in one sentence, after his libation. He never asks harm for anyone. The assembly answers:

— *May it be carried.*

7. The sacrifice. If there is a sacrifice, the apprentice stands in the circle and keeps silent. He touches neither the animal nor the knife. He watches, for he is learning.

8. The register. The sage enters the names of those who came, and the requests. Each, on hearing his name, answers:

— *Present.*

9. The meal. What was sacrificed is cooked and eaten on the spot, by all, and what is not eaten is given away. What remains of the alcohol is drunk. People laugh.

10. The closing. The sage says the closing word. All answer:

— *Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.*

The cult of the full moon far from the sanctuary

He who is alone, or with his family, far from any sanctuary, holds the same cult before the earth of the sanctuary, on the same evening: he removes his upper garment, he pours water on his hands, he says the call to the Creator and the answer, he names his Ancestors, he pours the three liquids with the words, he says his request, and he closes. He himself enters his name and his request in a notebook which is his register, with the date, and he gives a copy to his sanctuary when he can. If they are several, they form the circle. The cult of two people before a bowl of earth in Montreal is the same cult as that of a hundred people under the baobab of Lassa: it is the date and the meaning that are common; the place and the number are free.

The cults of the 1st, the 12th and the 23rd

The sanctuary of Lassa holds in addition, on the first, the twelfth and the twenty-third day of each month, an accessory cult at the foot of the baobab, at which three chickens are sacrificed. These cults are optional: they are the business of the sanctuary and of those who live there, no one is summoned to them, and the apprentice need not concern himself with them. He knows of them so as to know that they exist, and so as not to be surprised at being invited to one some day.

VI. The Year: the Five Days Outside Time

Once a year, from July 21 to 25, all the Kamites of the world keep together the five days outside time – the epagomenal days of our fathers' calendar, which belong to no month – and those who can make the pilgrimage to their sanctuary. "The Feast of the Worker" and "The Kamite Pilgrimage" instituted them; the apprentice must know what he will do there.

July 21 is the day of the pregnant woman and the child to be born, and the day of the Queen Mothers: the women of the sanctuary are named, and the first worker is honoured. The 22nd is the day of the child: the children born in the year are named, and they are given their name in the language. The 23rd is the day of the Worker: those who have worked are named, by their name, before all, and their work is entered. The 24th is the day of the sages: the sages are raised and the elders are listened to. The 25th is the day of the Ancestors and the day of the Door: those who departed in the year and those who departed through the doors of no return are named,

those who come back are welcomed, names are given back, and the great libation of the year is poured. On July 26 the new year begins: 6264 will open on July 26, 2027.

The apprentice takes part in the five days as he takes part in the full moon: he comes, bare-chested, he pours, he answers, he keeps silent during the sacrifice, he eats, and he is entered. He who cannot come keeps the five days where he is, each evening, before the earth, with the words of the full moon, and on the 25th he names his dead. During the five days, no one works: it is the only time of the year withdrawn from work, and that is why it is outside time.

VII. The Crossing of the Threshold

Before the threshold, the presentation. He who comes back to the fold is first presented to his Ancestors according to "Kamite, Come Back to the Fold": a word, a presentation to his own, a meal, a line if he wants one — the same day, at any age, without payment, without a name to change. He is from then on a Kamite in his own right. The threshold of the Bwa Sacré is something else: the voluntary entry into the apprenticeship of a house, and no one is bound to it.

Here is how one enters. One does not enter alone, one does not enter in secret, and one does not enter by paying. One enters at a full moon, presented by someone who answers for you, before the circle, with water on one's hands and one's name in one's mouth.

The jatigi

He who wants to enter chooses himself a jatigi — a host, according to the institution of djatiguiya that "The House Without a Door"

described: a Kamite or a sage of the sanctuary, who presents him, who answers for him on his own name, and who will accompany him during the twelve moons of his apprenticeship. The jatigi is not paid; he is entered. He who knows none makes himself known to the sanctuary, by day, before witnesses. Time is taken to come to know him, and a Kamite who agrees to answer for him on his name becomes his jatigi. No one is presented at the threshold on the very evening he is seen for the first time.

The rite of the threshold

At the chosen full moon, after the water on the hands and the call to the Ancestors, before the libations, the jatigi comes forward with the candidate, bare-chested, and says:

> The jatigi, before the circle, his hand on the candidate's shoulder.
>
> *Here is (he says the candidate's full name), son of (the father) and of (the mother). He comes to the threshold. I answer for him on my name.*
>
> The sage, to the candidate.
>
> *Do you know who made you?*
>
> *– The Creator of all things, of whom no one has made an image.*
>
> *Do you know who carries your name before Him?*
>
> *– My Ancestors, whom I name and do not worship.*
>
> *Do you know what you pour?*
>
> *– Water, milk and alcohol, on the earth that receives.*

Do you know what holds you?

– My name, and what is said of it when I am not there.

What year are we in?

– In the year (the current year) of the Kamite era.

Are you free?

– I am free. No one compelled me, and no one will hold me back.

Then say your lineage.

The candidate names his father, his father's father, his mother and his mother's mother – as far back as he knows. If he does not know, he says "this far I know; I will learn the rest." He who knows nothing presents himself by his breath, and he is presented.

The sage pours water on both the candidate's hands, then on his head.

The water has washed you of another's hour. You enter with your name. Pour.

The candidate crouches before the earth and pours his first libation, with the words of the full moon. Then the sage writes his name, his lineage, the name of his jatigi and the date in the register, and says:

He is entered. The threshold is crossed.

– He is entered. Hotep.

From that night, he is an apprentice of the Bwa Sacré. He bears that title for twelve moons, during which he keeps the word of dawn, the account of evening and the cult of the full moon, he reconstructs

his lineage as far back as he can, he reads the writings his jatigi gives him moon after moon, he learns at least to greet, to count and to name his Ancestors in his mother's tongue, and he keeps silent during the sacrifice. At the twelfth moon, if he has held, he passes Kamite: that is the second book. The register of the sanctuary is not public and does not leave the enclosure; he who wishes to remain discreet is entered in it under the only name his jatigi knows.

What the apprentice does not do

He does not sacrifice. He does not pour for anyone but himself. He does not speak in the name of the sanctuary. He receives no secret. He shames no one for his religion, neither in his family nor elsewhere. And he pays nothing, to anyone, for anything: he who asks him for money to initiate him is not of the Bwa Sacré, and his name will be said under the tree.

VIII. The Apprentice's Calendar

Here are the full moons of the coming year, calculated for the hour of Abidjan and Bamako, so that no one mistakes the night. The cult is held on the evening of the date given. When the moon is full after midnight, it is on the evening of that date that one gathers, not the evening before.

Full moon	Date	Kamite year
First moon of apprenticeship	Saturday, September 26, 2026	6263
Second	Monday, October 26, 2026	6263
Third	Tuesday, November 24, 2026	6263
Fourth	Thursday, December 24, 2026	6263
Fifth	Friday, January 22, 2027	6263
Sixth	Saturday, February 20, 2027	6263
Seventh	Monday, March 22, 2027	6263
Eighth	Tuesday, April 20, 2027	6263
Ninth	Thursday, May 20, 2027	6263
Tenth	Saturday, June 19, 2027	6263
Eleventh	Sunday, July 18, 2027	6263
The five days outside time	July 21 to 25, 2027	6263 → 6264
Twelfth	Tuesday, August 17, 2027	6264

He who crosses the threshold at the full moon of September 26, 2026 will be able to pass Kamite at that of August 17, 2027, if he has held. He who enters later counts twelve moons from his own. The sages publish the following calendar each year, at the full moon of August.

The apprentice's rhythm therefore holds in one line: each day, dawn and evening; each moon, the cult; each year, the five days; and, on the first, the twelfth and the twenty-third of the month, a cult that is not asked of him. It is more regular than what he leaves, and it requires neither mat, nor pew, nor tithe.

IX. The Questions of the One Who Hesitates

Here are the questions put to me at the threshold, and the answers, short, so that they can be repeated.

"And if I miss a full moon?" You come back at the next. You are not punished: you are absent from one register, and you return to it. God keeps no accounts, and your Ancestors saw you born: they know you will come back.

"Must I change my first name?" No. You keep the name you bear; you learn, alongside it, that of your lineage, and if you want a name in the language, it will be given to you on the day of the child, July 22, when you are a Kamite. A name is not taken away: it is added.

"May I go on going to the mosque, to the church?" You are free. No one will forbid it, and no one will reproach you for it under the tree. You are free, today and in ten years: one may pray on Friday and pour at the full moon, and no one under the tree will ask you to choose. One thing only is asked of you: do not call demons, in the morning, those you feed in the evening.

"I am a woman: do I have the same place?" The same, and more: "The Queen Mothers" instituted the queen mother of each sanctuary, who sits in her own right and may correct the Venerable

himself. A woman enters by the same threshold, pours the same libation, and may become a sage.

“I do not drink alcohol.” You do not drink; you pour. The alcohol you pour is not for you, it is for them. And at the meal, you drink water.

“I live in Paris, I have neither earth nor sanctuary.” You have an earthenware bowl and a handful of earth from your village, which you will have sent or which you will take on your next return. You keep dawn, evening and the full moon before it, and you enter in your notebook. A room where your own gather at the full moon is a sanctuary. And you look for a jatigi: there are Kamites in every city.

“Is the blood of animals necessary?” For you, no: the apprentice does not sacrifice, and many Kamites never sacrifice. Sacrifice is done by those who have a sanctuary, to ask a favour, and the animal is eaten. He who eats chicken and is frightened by a sacrificed chicken should visit a slaughterhouse.

“You have no holy book.” We have a register, and we know who writes it: you have this book in your hands, it is signed, dated and sealed, and the writings it cites are too. The holy book of the others, they must believe where it comes from. Ours, you can verify.

“What happens if I want to leave?” You leave. You tell your jatigi, your name stays in the register with the mention of your departure, and no one will curse you. The door of the Bwa Sacré opens both ways: that is how one knows it is not a cage.

“And if my parents drive me out?” Your jatigi answers for you, and the sanctuary receives you: that is the law of djatiguiya. But before it comes to that, shame no one: pour in silence, at home, and

let them see in a year what you become. It is the mothers who, first, ask that someone pour for them.

X. What We Institute

Let one measure the nature of this chapter, as for the writings that institute: it is not a proposal, it is a protocol, and it is executed — with its stages, its exact words, its witnesses who are all of you, and its definitive entry, the seal that timestamps this publication. According to our own teachings, when these four things are gathered, the change is not described: it is done.

Consequently, and from this day, the Bwa Sacré institutes what follows.

First, the seven words. The seven words of chapter II are the common word of the house of the Bwa Sacré: they are learned, they are not sworn, and no one is received or refused on them. They are said at the threshold, taught to children and answered to whoever asks what we believe.

Second, the day. The Kamite keeps each day the word of dawn, with water on the earth, and the account of evening, in a real voice. The greeting of the Kamites is *Hotep*.

Third, the moon. The common cult of the full moon is the cult of the Bwa Sacré. It is held on the evening of the date of the full moon, bare-chested and barefoot, with water, milk and alcohol poured on the earth, the request said aloud, the register and the meal. Those who have a sanctuary may sacrifice there. The cults of the 1st, the 12th and the 23rd are optional and proper to each sanctuary.

Fourth, the year. The five days outside time, from July 21 to 25, are kept by all, at the sanctuary or before the earth, and July 26 opens the year.

Fifth, the earth of the sanctuary. He who lives far away keeps at home, in an earthenware vessel, an earth taken from the sanctuary or from the village of his fathers, before which he pours; he gives it back to the ground and renews it at each return.

Sixth, the threshold. One enters at a full moon, presented by a jatigi who answers for one, by the rite of the threshold of chapter VII, without payment; one is an apprentice for twelve moons, and one does not sacrifice. He who sells initiation is not of the Bwa Sacré.

Seventh, freedom and the seal. Nothing of the foregoing is imposed on anyone, freedom of conscience remains entire, and the door opens both ways. The present book is signed electronically and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that the date on which the threshold was opened is established for all and for ever.

XI. Conclusion: Tomorrow Morning

I sum up, for the one who hesitates, what he will do tomorrow morning if he decides to cross the threshold — for that is what he wants to know, and that is what the word alone did not give him.

Tomorrow morning, he will rise, he will take water in his right hand, he will let it fall on the earth, and he will say four sentences with his father's name. In the evening, he will say what he did, to whom he was useful, and what he owes. He will look, within the month, for a jatigi. On September 26, at nightfall, he will go bare-chested to the

sanctuary or sit before his earth, he will pour water, milk and alcohol, he will name his Ancestors, he will say his request, and he will be entered. He will do this for twelve moons. From July 21 to 25, he will not work. And at the twelfth moon, he will no longer be at the threshold: he will be inside.

This book has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

You are not going towards the void. You are going towards the earth, the water, the milk, the alcohol, the moon and your name. They were waiting for you.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 17, 2026, in the year 6263 of the Kamite era.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré

— Chapter II —

The Libation

Book of the Kamite — second of the Three Books of Lassa, for the one who has crossed the threshold and held twelve moons: the passage, the right to pour for one's house, the rites of life, the rule of the name and the five days

Book of initiation instituted by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 4, 2026

Sanctuary of Lassa
year 6263 of the Kamite era

Preliminary Note

This book is the second of the Three Books of Lassa. It is addressed to the one who has crossed the threshold and held twelve moons — the word of dawn, the account of evening, the cult of the full moon, the reading of the writings, the lineage reconstructed — and who is about to pass Kamite. It gives him what the apprentice did not have: the right to pour for his house, the rites of life he may henceforth hold or ask for, the rule of the name that binds him, and his part in the institutions of the Bwa Sacré — the palaver, the tontine, the register of voices, the book of the homeland, the return.

The first book answered the one who hesitated. This one speaks to the one who is inside, and it speaks to him differently: it no longer reassures him, it charges him. A Kamite is not a man who has changed his prayer: he is a man whose name can henceforth be said under the tree, and who has duties towards those who bear the same. This book lists them, hiding none.

Like the first, this book contains nothing secret. What is passed on under the tree is still passed on there, at its hour. What is written here is what the Kamite does before all, before his house and before the sanctuary; a man wrote it, in his name, under his seal. And nothing is imposed: the door always opens both ways.

I. Opening: the Twelfth Moon

Twelve moons ago, a man came to the threshold, presented by a jatigi, bare-chested, with water on his hands. He did not know the name of his father's father. He trembled a little as he poured, because he had been told all his life that pouring to the earth was

the devil's work. He poured all the same. Then he went home, and the next day, at dawn, he took water in his right hand.

Twelve moons later, he knows the name of his father's father and of his mother's mother, and of four generations behind them. He has said more than three hundred and fifty evening accounts, and he stopped lying to himself around the fortieth. He has poured twelve times before the earth, he has read twelve writings, he can greet and count in his mother's tongue, and he has kept silent twelve times during the sacrifice. He missed a full moon, perhaps two, and he discovered that nothing happened to him, except that he wanted to come back. His mother looked at him first with worry, then with curiosity, then one evening she asked him to pour for her own father. He no longer prays at another's hour: he lives at the hour of the moon.

This man is no longer an apprentice. At the twelfth moon, he passes Kamite, and this book is his. It tells him what that word commits him to: to pour for others than himself, to name a child, to accompany a dead man, to sit under the tree, to keep a fund, to write a land, to learn a language — and to bear a name that can be said aloud.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

II. What the Kamite Knows

The apprentice believed the seven words. The Kamite understands them, and he knows besides four things the threshold did not yet ask.

He knows what an institution is. We said it in “The Sacred Protocols” and repeated it in every writing that institutes: an institution is not an idea, it is a protocol — stages, exact words, witnesses, and a definitive entry. When these four things are gathered, the thing is not described, it is done; when one is missing, one has spoken for nothing. The Kamite therefore knows why the cult has an order, why the words are not changed, why one answers “it is poured” and not “amen” at random, and why the register closes everything. He also knows how to distinguish protocol from ornament: what makes the passage, and what decorates. The order of the cult is protocol; the colour of the wrapper is ornament. One holds the one, one leaves the other free.

He knows what the register is. The register of the sanctuary is twofold: the invisible ledger, what is said of each name under the tree; and the written register, where the sage enters the entries, the passages, the births, the names, the deaths, the palavers and the requests, dated and sealed as our writings are. The Kamite now has a line in it at each moon, and he knows that this line is what he will leave. He never asks that it be erased, and he never asks that what is not be written in it.

He knows what the sacred is. “The Price of Silence” said it: the sacred is the most powerful deployment layer there is, the one that keeps whole woods standing without a guard. The Kamite does not play with it: he does not tell what is not told, he does not photograph what is not photographed, he sells nothing of what is given. He has not yet received any secret, and he knows he will receive them only under the tree, when a sage judges him ready — and that he who demands them does not deserve them.

And he knows where he is in time. He counts the years from the calendar of our fathers of Egypt, as the Kamite tradition has fixed it, he knows the rule of 4236 and 4237, he knows that July 26 opens the year, that the five days are outside time, and that the full moon is his month. A Kamite who does not know what year he lives in has not yet left another's hour.

III. The Passage

Here is the rite by which the apprentice becomes a Kamite. It is held at a full moon, the twelfth or a later one, at the sanctuary or before the earth if he is far away — but then before at least two Kamites, for a passage without witnesses is not done. The jatigi presents him, as he presented him at the threshold.

What is required

Twelve moons since the threshold, of which at least nine cults kept — at the sanctuary or before the earth, entered. The lineage recited as far back as it can be: four generations for the one whose house has kept the names; for the one from whom the slave trade, the city or the orphanage took the names, the lineage of the house that received him with the consent of its elders, or, failing that, the presentation by his own breath before the fetish. No one is held at the threshold for names that were stolen from him. The twelve writings read. The greeting, the counting and the names of the Ancestors in the mother's tongue. And the word of the jatigi, who says before all that the apprentice has held, or who says that he will wait one moon more: the jatigi does not lie on his name.

The rite of passage

After the call to the Ancestors, before the libations. The jatigi comes forward with the apprentice, bare-chested.

Here is (the name), son of (the father) and of (the mother), whom I presented at the threshold twelve moons ago. He has held. I say it on my name.

The sage, to the apprentice.

Say your lineage.

The apprentice names, without hesitating, his lineage as far back as it can be: his father, his father's father, that one's father, and that one's father; then his mother, his mother's mother, and two generations more. He from whom the names were taken says the lineage of the house that received him, or presents himself by his own breath before the fetish: no one is held at the threshold for names that were stolen from him.

Say the seven words — they are said, they are not sworn.

The apprentice says them, in order.

Greet us in your mother's tongue, and name her Ancestors to her.

He does so. Then the sage takes the apprentice's right hand and lays it on the earth.

Until this evening you poured for yourself. From this evening you pour for your house: for your wife or your husband, for your children, for your mother if she asks you, for your guest. What you pour, you answer for. What you ask, you ask aloud. Do you know it?

— I know it. I answer for it on my name.

> *Then pour for your house.*
>
> The new Kamite pours the three liquids, naming this time not only his Ancestors but the living of his house, one by one. The assembly answers:
>
> *— It is poured. He pours for his own.*
>
> The sage writes in the register: “passed Kamite,” the date, the name of the jatigi. Then:
>
> *He is a Kamite. His name is said under the tree.*
>
> *— He is a Kamite. Hotep.*

The new Kamite remains bare-chested until the end of the cult, and that evening he pours last, after all the others. The next morning, at dawn, his word changes by one line: he no longer says only “I rise with my name,” he says “I rise with my name and those of my house.”

IV. The Domestic Libation

The right of the Kamite is the right to pour for his house, and this right is exercised at home, before the earth of the sanctuary or at the foot of the tree in the courtyard, outside the full moons, whenever life calls for it. Here are the occasions and the words.

The ordinary libation

It is made when someone of the house leaves on a journey or returns from one, when a child starts school or sits an examination, when a business begins, when a sick person recovers, when a guest

has been received, when one has been unjust and has made amends. The Kamite crouches before the earth, the house around him, and says:

> The house in a circle. The three liquids.
>
> *Ancestors of this house – he names his own and those of his wife or husband –, here is water, milk and alcohol. (He pours.)*
>
> *Here is what is happening: (he says it in one sentence). Carry it before Him.*
>
> *– It is poured.*
>
> *Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.*

The libation for another

When his mother, his father, a brother, a neighbour who is not a Kamite asks him to pour for him – and it happens, sooner than one thinks – the Kamite does it, without asking him to believe anything or to pay anything. He says: "I pour for *(the name)*, son of *(his father)*, who asked me to; Ancestors of his lineage, here is water, milk and alcohol; here is his request: *(he says it)*." He does not charge, he does not enter the person in the sanctuary's register without his consent, and he speaks to him of the threshold only if he asks. That is how Kamitism enters houses: not by preaching, but by the mother who asked that someone pour.

What the Kamite does not pour

He does not pour to ask harm for anyone: neither the fall of a rival, nor the illness of an enemy, nor the failure of another. The request

that harms is not carried, and he who makes it aloud enters himself, under the tree, as a man who asks for harm. Nor does he pour for money, or against money. And he does not pour alone what requires the sanctuary: the passage, the name, the dead, the return are rites of the sanctuary, and he asks the sage for them.

V. The Rites of Life

Four times in a life, at least, the house needs the sanctuary: when a child is born, when two people are united, when someone dies, and when someone comes back. The Kamite must know what happens at each of these passages, what he does there and what he asks there. The complete words of the officiant are in the third book; here is the rite as the house lives it.

The child's name

The child born in a Kamite's house receives his name before the sanctuary at the first full moon following his birth — or, if mother and child cannot come, at the first full moon when they can; and he is named again, with all the children of the year, on July 22, the day of the child. The name is given in the mother's or the father's tongue, and its meaning is said aloud. The father, or the mother if she is alone, carries the child into the circle, bare-chested; the sage pours a drop of water on the child's forehead, says the name, explains its meaning, and the assembly answers "He is named." Then the Kamite pours for the child, and the child is entered in the register with his lineage — his mother's name beside his father's, as "The Queen Mothers" instituted. The child may bear at the civil

registry whatever name one wishes: the name of the sanctuary is the one his Ancestors hear.

The union

The Bwa Sacré imposes no form of marriage: each people has its own, and "The Stealers of Women" described that of the Bwa with enough admiration for it not to be made a rule for all. It institutes only what every Kamite marriage contains: the consent of both, said aloud before the circle, without anyone being able to give it in their place; the absence of bride-price, for no daughter of the Bwa Sacré is given or acquired; the libation poured by both, each naming the Ancestors of the other, for a union is the entry into two lineages; the entry in the register, in both names; and the reminder, before all, that the door of the natal house remains open to the woman, with her children, whatever happens. The rest — the feast, the dolo, the dance which the married couple close instead of opening — is ornament, and it is free.

The passage to the Ancestors

When someone of the house dies, the Kamite does three things. The same day, before the earth, he pours water only, and he says the dead person's name with his lineage: that is the first line. The body is returned to the earth according to the custom of the people and the family — the Bwa Sacré disputes the funeral with no one, and if the family is Muslim or Christian, the Kamite stands there upright, in silence, and shames no one. Then, at the first full moon that follows, before the sanctuary or before the earth, he pours the three liquids and says the dead person's name among the Ancestors for the first time: that is the passage, and the assembly answers "He is

named among them." The sage writes the line: "passed to the Ancestors," with the date. And on the following July 25, day of the Ancestors, the dead person is named before all, with those of the year. From then on, he is in the word of dawn of his children: that is his dwelling.

The return

When someone from the other shore comes back — a descendant of the slave trade looking for his house, according to "The Door of Return" — the Kamite may be his jatigi of return: he receives him, lodges him, presents him to the sanctuary, answers for him on his name, and accompanies him. He is presented to his Ancestors on the day he arrives, according to the Fold; July 25, day of the Door, is the day when the name given back is said before all, if he wishes it, in the language of the sanctuary. Every pilgrim and every son of the return is received by day, before witnesses, unarmed, and his jatigi truly answers for him; where war is under way, one receives outside the village, and one takes the time needed before leading anyone to where the women, the children and the old are. He does not get paid; he gets entered. He who sells the return sells his brothers a second time.

VI. The Sacrifice, Seen by the One Who Asks

The Kamite does not sacrifice with his own hand: that is the charge of the sacrificer, and it is the third book that gives it. But he may henceforth ask for a sacrifice, and he must know what he is asking for.

The sacrifice is made to ask a favour of the Ancestors — a healing, a birth, a business, a road, a reconciliation, a land. It is not a punishment, nor a tribute, nor a currency: it is a meal offered, of which the blood is the Ancestors' share, poured to the earth at the foot of the tree, and the flesh is the share of the living, cooked and eaten on the spot. One asks harm for no one, and one does not sacrifice to show one's wealth.

The measure follows the request, according to the custom of Lassa. A chicken, for the request of a single person: a man, a woman, a child. Three chickens, for the request of a house. A goat accompanied by three chickens, for the request of a lineage or a sanctuary. An ox accompanied by three goats, each accompanied by three chickens, for the great request — that of the whole sanctuary, that of the pilgrimage, that of a sanctuary being founded. The Kamite who wants a sacrifice speaks to the sage before the full moon, brings the animal alive and healthy, or entrusts its purchase to the sanctuary at the market price, adding nothing. On the evening of the cult, after his libation, he says his request aloud, and he stands, bare-chested, beside the sacrificer, touching neither the animal nor the knife. Then he eats with all, and he is entered with his request.

The Kamite also knows how to read what the sanctuary reads. In the custom of our villages, the chicken whose blood has been poured is released, and one watches how it falls: on its back, the request is received; on its belly, it is not yet, and one will ask again, or otherwise. The Kamite accepts what the earth has said. He does not begin again the same evening, he does not argue, he does not pay for a second chicken to force the answer. The Ancestors are not bribed.

VII. The Kamite's Five Days

The apprentice came to the five days and kept silent. The Kamite has an active part in them, and here is his, day by day.

July 21, day of the pregnant woman, the child to be born and the Queen Mothers: the Kamite presents there the women of his house who are expecting a child, and the queen mother names them; he names there, if he is of the council, the market women, the tontine mothers and the healers of his lineage, by their name, before all. It is also on that day that the sanctuary names, with the Queen Mothers, its women who died in childbirth, according to "The Other Front."

July 22, day of the child: the Kamite brings there the children of his house born in the year, and they receive their name in the language, or receive it again if they already had it at a full moon. It is also on that day that the Kamite who does not yet have a name in the language receives it, if he has asked for it.

July 23, day of the Worker: the Kamite is named there, by his name and by his work, with those of his sanctuary, as "The Feast of the Worker" instituted; and he enters his year's work in the register, in one line. He who has no work is named too, for the worker remains when the work goes.

July 24, day of the sages: the Kamite listens. It is the day when the sages are raised, when the elders speak, when the palaver of the year is held for what has not been settled, and when the Kamite may, if he has been appointed, sit among the witnesses.

July 25, day of the Ancestors and of the Door: the Kamite names there his dead of the year, those whose passage he has poured, and he pours the great libation with all. If a son of the return has

arrived in the year under his guard, he presents him that day for the name given back. And where a door exists, he crosses it in the direction of the land.

During the five days, the Kamite does not work, and his house does not work. He who cannot come to the sanctuary keeps the five days at home, before the earth, with the words of the full moon, one day after another, and names each day those whom that day names. On July 26 he says, at dawn, the new year: “We are in 6264.”

VIII. His Part in the Institutions

The writings of the Bwa Sacré have instituted, one by one, things that hold only if Kamites hold them. Here is each one’s part, and it is not optional: it is what distinguishes a member from a spectator.

The palaver. Every dispute between the Kamite and another member — debt, word, land, family, honour, blows without blood — is brought under the tree if both wish it, according to “The Palaver Tree”; no one is compelled to it, and each may prefer the judge of the State. Blood, rape, harm to children are not brought under the tree: they go to the judge. The Kamite who has been wronged asks for the palaver before the complaint; the Kamite who has done wrong goes there with his own, and he makes amends. He may be appointed witness, and he does not refuse; he may, after three years, be chosen as an elder of palaver.

The tontine. Each sanctuary keeps, under the guard of its queen mother, a tontine according to the ancient mechanism. The Kamite joins it if he can, he pays his contribution on the fixed date, he does not miss his turn — for he who misses is struck off the tontine until

he has made up his turn; his house may answer for him, it is not punished in his place –, and he knows that the sanctuary's tontine pays first for the transport of the woman in labour to the maternity ward, according to "The Other Front."

The register of voices. The Kamite records his elders while they are there – the tales, the genealogies, the names of plants, the proverbs, the greetings – in their language, with their consent, their name, the date and the place, and he deposits the files with the sanctuary, which dates them, seals them and stores them where men and machines can read them. A telephone is enough. A Kamite who has recorded his mother's voice has done more for his language than ten speeches.

The language. In his house, the child's first language is his mother's, according to the rule instituted by "My Mother's Tongue." The Kamite shames no one for speaking as his mother does, and he does not keep the symbol.

The land. The Kamite has the lands of his lineage entered in the book of the homeland of his sanctuary – boundaries, keepers, rules of use –, he never sells alone what he holds with three others, and he has the land cultivated by a woman written in that woman's name, according to "The Written Land."

The return. The Kamite may be a jatigi of return, and he never sells the return.

The threshold. After a year as a Kamite, he may be the jatigi of an apprentice: present him, answer for him, follow him for twelve moons, give him one writing per moon, and say before all, at the

twelfth moon, whether he has held. A Kamite who has never been anyone's jatigi has not yet given back what he was given.

IX. The Rule of the Name

What binds the Kamite is not a list of prohibitions: it is a single rule, from which everything follows — to live so that one's name can be said aloud, under the tree, when one is not there. From this rule, seven consequences, which the Kamite learns as he learned the seven words.

> The rule of the name
>
> *One. I do not lie before the earth, nor in the evening in my account, nor under the tree: a name that lies no longer has a register.*
>
> *Two. I receive the stranger as my fathers received him — by day, before witnesses, after looking at his hands —, and I answer for my guest on my name. I open my door to the brother, never to the blade: it is forbidden to let oneself be killed.*
>
> *Three. I make amends before I lodge a complaint, and I go under the tree for what can be repaired, and to the judge for blood.*
>
> *Four. I speak to my children in my mother's tongue, and I shame no one for speaking his own.*
>
> *Five. I neither give, acquire nor injure any daughter, and I do not take the widow's land.*
>
> *Six. I sell neither the threshold, nor the return, nor the rite, nor the name, nor the secret; what is given is given.*
>
> *Seven. I compel no one to believe, I curse no one, and I leave the door open both ways.*

He who fails the rule is not damned: he is brought under the tree, he makes amends, and his line of amends closes his line of fault. He who refuses to make amends, or who sells what is given, is removed from the register of his sanctuary, aloud and before all — not from the number of the Kamites, for no one cuts a man off from his lineage —, until amends: that is the only penalty of the Bwa Sacré, and it is reversible by amends, never by time.

X. The Kamite's Questions

"May I pour for a child who is not mine?" Yes, if his parents ask you to, in their name; and for a child without parents, as for your own.

"My wife is not a Kamite: does the libation of the house count?" It counts. You name her Ancestors with yours, and you ask nothing of her. A house where one pours and the other prays is not divided: it has two doors, and the Ancestors know both.

"May I make a sacrifice at home?" No: the sacrifice is made at the sanctuary, by the sacrificer, before the circle. At home, you pour. The day you found a sanctuary — that is the third book — you will have a sacrificer.

"What to say when I am asked whether I am an animist?" That you believe in one Creator, that you name your Ancestors and do not worship them, and that you pour water, milk and alcohol to the earth. That you are a Kamite, and that you owe no one an explanation.

"I have missed three full moons." You come back at the fourth, you say it in your evening account, and you enter your absence. The register is not made to punish you: it is made so that you see yourself.

"A member of the sanctuary has wronged me." You ask the sage for the palaver, before any complaint. You will speak first, without being interrupted. No one will part before the agreement.

“I am offered to pay to receive a secret.” He who offers it to you is not of the Bwa Sacré. You tell the sage, and his name will be said under the tree. Secrets are received; they are not bought.

“May I become a sage?” After thirty-six moons as a Kamite, if you have been the jatigi of three apprentices, if you have sat as a witness under the tree, if you have kept a register, and if three sages or the Venerable judge you ready, you will be raised on July 24, day of the sages. That is the third book.

XI. What We Institute

Let one measure the nature of this chapter, as for the writings that institute: it is not a proposal, it is a protocol, and it is executed — with its stages, its exact words, its witnesses who are all of you, and its definitive entry, the seal that timestamps this publication. According to our own teachings, when these four things are gathered, the change is not described: it is done.

Consequently, and from this day, the Bwa Sacré institutes what follows.

First, the passage. The apprentice becomes a Kamite by the rite of chapter III, at a full moon, after twelve moons including nine cults, the lineage as far back as it can be, the twelve writings, the mother’s tongue and the word of his jatigi. He is entered “passed Kamite.”

Second, the right to pour. The Kamite pours for his house, for whoever asks him, and for no harm; he does not sacrifice with his own hand, and he does not pour against money.

Third, the rites of life. The child's name at the first full moon and on July 22, in the language, the mother's name beside the father's; the union by the consent of both aloud, without bride-price, with the libation to both lineages and the natal door open; the passage to the Ancestors by the water of the same day, the three liquids of the following full moon and the name of July 25; the return by the jatigi of return and the name given back.

Fourth, the measure of the sacrifice. A chicken for a single person, three for a house, a goat and three chickens for a lineage or a sanctuary, an ox, three goats and nine chickens for the great request. The sacrifice is made at the sanctuary, by the sacrificer, for a favour, never for harm, and everything is eaten on the spot.

Fifth, the Kamite's part. The palaver before the complaint, the sanctuary's tontine, the register of voices, the mother's tongue, the book of the homeland, the jatigi of return, and the jatigi of the threshold after one year.

Sixth, the rule of the name. The seven consequences of chapter IX bind the Kamite; failure is made good under the tree; the refusal to make amends and the sale of what is given are punished by removal from the register of the sanctuary — not from the number of the Kamites —, reversible by amends.

Seventh, freedom and the seal. Nothing of the foregoing is imposed on anyone, freedom of conscience remains entire, and the door opens both ways. The present book is signed electronically and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that the date on which the Kamite received the right to pour for his house is established for all and for ever.

XII. Conclusion: the House

I sum up, so that it may be remembered and passed on.

The apprentice poured for himself; the Kamite pours for his house, and for whoever asks him. He knows what an institution, a register, a secret and a year are. He has passed before witnesses, his lineage in his mouth. He names his children in the language, he unites by consent said aloud, he accompanies his dead until July 25, he receives those who come back. He asks for the sacrifice at his measure, for a favour, never for harm, and he accepts what the earth has said. He has his part in the palaver, the tontine, the voices, the language, the land, the return and the threshold. And he lives under a single rule, of which he knows the seven consequences: that his name can be said aloud when he is not there.

This book has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

You no longer pour for yourself alone. Your house is behind you when you crouch before the earth. Pour for it.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 17, 2026, in the year 6263 of the Kamite era.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré

— Chapter III —

The Baobab

Book of the Sage — third of the Three Books of Lassa, for the one who receives the charge: the sanctuary, the cult of the full moon and the sacrifice, the rites of life, the five days, the tree, the register and the apprentices

Book of initiation instituted by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 4, 2026

Sanctuary of Lassa
year 6263 of the Kamite era

Preliminary Note

This book is the third and last of the Three Books of Lassa. It is addressed to the one who receives the charge — the sage — and to those who, under him, hold a charge of the sanctuary: the sacrificer, the queen mother, the elders of palaver, the keeper of the register, the keeper of the wood. It gives what the first two announced without giving: the complete liturgy of the full moon, with all the words of the officiant; the protocol of the sacrifice; the rites of life as they are conducted; the five days; the founding of a sanctuary, the register and its seal; the palaver; and the training of apprentices, moon after moon.

This book is the public liturgy of the Bwa Sacré: everything a sage says and does before the circle, omitting nothing, so that the cult is the same at Lassa, in Abidjan, in Paris and in Bahia, and so that no one can distort it by claiming to draw on a hidden source. It is not the secret. The secret of the sanctuary — what is passed on to the sage under the tree, at its hour, from the mouth of another sage — is in no book, and he who claims to have read it lies. “The Price of Silence” said why; this book abides by it.

This book is also a charge, to be weighed first. The sage is not paid. He is not obeyed: he is listened to, and the queen mother may correct him in public. He declares no war, blesses no weapon, curses no one; but no one under his tree is under orders to let himself be killed, and he will never give that order. He answers, on his name, for everything that happens under his tree, and his name will be said under another’s tree. He who wants the charge for the rank will

not have it: the sage is chosen for his name. Like the first two books, this one imposes nothing on anyone.

I. Opening: the Tree of Lassa

There is, at Lassa, a tree under which the Bwa Sacré poured first. That is where it holds its sanctuary; the way is learned from the jatigi, and the days are those of the calendar kept by the Bwa Sacré software. It is at the foot of that tree that, each full moon, water, milk and alcohol are poured, chickens, goats and oxen are sacrificed, and on the first, the twelfth and the twenty-third day of each month three chickens are offered without anyone being summoned. This book bears the name of that tree because everything it institutes was done there first, and because a sanctuary, wherever it may be, is a baobab of Lassa that has taken root elsewhere.

A baobab is not planted for oneself. He who plants it will not eat of its shade: it is his grandchildren who will sit there. That is what the charge of the sage is: to plant a tree whose size he will not see, to keep a register others will read, to train apprentices who will replace him, and to run, moon after moon, a protocol that does not bear his name. The sage is not a priest: he does not stand between men and God. He is the one who knows the order, who says the exact words, who holds the knife with respect and the register with exactness, and who sits under the tree so that others may speak there.

This book gives him the order, the words, the knife, the register and the tree. The rest — what makes a sage a sage — is not written: it is seen, under the tree, when he is not there.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

II. The Charges of the Sanctuary

A sanctuary of the Bwa Sacré stands by seven charges. They may be gathered on few heads in a small sanctuary, but they are always named, and always entered.

The sage. He presides over the cult, says the words of the officiant, receives at the threshold, makes pass, names, accompanies the dead, gives back names, raises. He is chosen for his name, after thirty-six moons as a Kamite, three apprentices guided, palavers sat and a register kept; he is raised on July 24 by the Venerable or by three sages. He does not appoint himself.

The sacrificer. He holds the knife. He is a sage, or a Kamite whom the sage has trained and appointed, and he sacrifices only under the tree, before the circle, bare-chested, according to the protocol of chapter IV. At Lassa, the sacrificer also holds the cults of the 1st, the 12th and the 23rd.

The queen mother. Instituted by "The Queen Mothers," chosen among the women of the sanctuary for her name, she sits in her own right on the council and under the tree, receives the affairs of women, keeps the tontine, names the women on July 21, and may correct the sage — and the Venerable — in public. A sanctuary without a queen mother deliberates without half its register.

The elders of palaver. Men and women, chosen for their name and not for their rank, for a time, they summon, listen, qualify and decide according to "The Palaver Tree." They are not paid by the parties; they are entered.

The keeper of the register. He keeps the written register of the sanctuary, seals its pages, and deposits it where it must be,

according to chapter VIII. He can read and write, and he knows, or he learns, what a fingerprint and an anchoring are.

The keeper of the wood. If the sanctuary keeps a wood, a spring, a hill or a place of initiation, a keeper traces its boundary, declares its prohibition, answers for it, and has the wood entered in the book of the homeland according to “The Written Land.”

The jatigis. The Kamites of the sanctuary who answer, on their name, for the apprentices they present and the sons of the return they receive. They are entered at each presentation.

The council of the sanctuary gathers the sage, the queen mother, the sacrificer, the elders and the keeper of the register. It meets after the cult of the full moon, under the tree, and it decides nothing against the palaver.

III. The Cult of the Full Moon: the Liturgy of the Officiant

Here is the complete cult, as the sage conducts it. The Kamites know their part of it from the first book; the sage knows the whole, and he changes neither the order nor the words. The sanctuaries say these words in their language: the meaning is the protocol, the language is free, and the translation is deposited in the register.

Before nightfall

The sage and the sacrificer arrive first. They sweep the foot of the tree, or the earth of the sanctuary. They set out the water for the hands in a jar, the three vessels of the sanctuary — water, milk,

alcohol — at the foot of the tree, and, if there is a sacrifice, the animals tied apart, in the shade, watered. They remove their upper garment and take off their shoes. The keeper of the register opens the register at the date. No one speaks of his affairs within the enclosure. No one enters the enclosure armed, neither he nor those who accompany him. The only knife is the sacrificer's, and it serves for that alone.

The order of the cult

1. The arrival. The sage stands at the foot of the tree. The Kamites enter, take off their shoes, remove their upper garment, greet — *Hotep* — and form the circle. The sage waits until the moon is visible, or until night has fallen.

2. Water on the hands. The sage, then the elders, pour water from the jar on the hands of each, beginning with the queen mother. Each rubs his hands and shakes them towards the ground. The sage pours last on his own. Silence.

3. The call to the Creator. The sage, both hands open towards the ground:

Creator of all things, You who made the earth where we are and the moon that lights us, You of whom no one has made an image and whose name no one utters lightly: we ask nothing of You for ourselves. We speak to those who are before You.

— He is, He has made, He watches.

4. The call to the Ancestors of the sanctuary. The sage names, in the order of the register, the Ancestors of the sanctuary: those

who founded it, those who were passed there, and the last passed in the year:

Ancestors of this sanctuary, you who are before Him and who carry our names: (he names them). You are named. Listen to your own.

– They are named.

5. The call of the lineages. In the circle, each in turn says his name, his father's, and names an Ancestor of his lineage. After each, the assembly:

– He is named.

6. The threshold, the passage, the name, the passage to the Ancestors. If this evening there is an apprentice to receive, a Kamite to make pass, a child to name or a dead person to pass to the Ancestors, it is here that the rite is held, according to books I and II and chapter V of this one. Each rite closes with its answer, and one resumes.

7. The libations. The sage crouches at the foot of the tree and pours first, the three liquids of the sanctuary:

Here is water, that you may live. Here is milk, that you may be nourished. Here is alcohol, that you may rejoice. Ancestors of this sanctuary, carry our names before Him.

– It is poured.

The queen mother pours next, then each in turn, with the words of the first book, naming his own. The sage answers each: "It is poured." The new Kamites pour last.

8. The requests. He who has a request says it aloud, standing, after his libation, in one sentence. The sage listens, and if the

request harms someone, he says “It is not carried,” and one moves on. Otherwise:

– May it be carried.

9. The sacrifice. If there is a sacrifice, the protocol of chapter IV is held here, request by request, from the smallest animal to the largest.

10. The register. The keeper of the register reads the names of those who came, and the requests carried. Each answers “Present.” The sage signs the page. The queen mother signs.

11. The meal. What was sacrificed is cooked and shared according to chapter IV. What remains of the three liquids is drunk or returned to the earth. People talk, laugh, sing what the sanctuary sings. The council meets afterwards, if it must.

12. The closing and the departure. The sage, standing, hands open towards the ground:

Ancestors of this sanctuary, you have been named, you have been fed, you have heard. What was poured is poured, what was asked is carried, what was written is written. We go home with our names. Until the next moon.

– Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

One dresses again outside the enclosure. The sage leaves last, after checking that no animal remains tied, no fire, no full vessel. The earth is left as it was found.

The cults of the 1st, the 12th and the 23rd

These three cults are those of the sanctuary of Lassa, and each sanctuary is free to hold similar ones or to hold none. They are brief: the sacrificer, bare-chested, with the sage or alone, pours water on his hands, says the call to the Creator and the call to the Ancestors of the sanctuary, pours the three liquids, sacrifices three chickens at the foot of the tree according to the protocol, for the sanctuary itself and not for a particular request, cooks them and shares them with whoever is there, and enters the cult. No one is summoned to them, and they are not made a duty.

IV. The Sacrifice: the Protocol of the Sacrificer

The sacrifice is the gravest act of the cult, and the least understood by those who watch us from afar. Here is how it is done, entirely, so that it is done everywhere in the same way, with the same respect, and so that no one can say he has seen anything else.

The animal

The animal is alive, healthy, unwounded, watered, and it has been treated gently since it was bought. A sick or mistreated animal is not offered: one does not give the Ancestors what one would not eat. It is bought at the market price, by the one who asks or by the sanctuary for him, and no one takes a margin. It is tied apart during the cult, in the shade, and it is not made to suffer while waiting.

The place and the men

One sacrifices at the foot of the tree, on the bare earth, where one has poured. The sacrificer is bare-chested, barefoot, his hands washed. The one who asks stands at his right, bare-chested, touching neither the animal nor the knife. The circle watches in silence. The knife is clean, sharpened, and it serves for that alone.

The protocol

1. The presentation. The sacrificer takes the animal, holds it against himself for a moment, then presents it above the earth, facing the circle. The one who asks says his request a second time, aloud.

2. The word. The sacrificer, the animal in his hands:

Ancestors of this sanctuary, and Ancestors of (the name of the one who asks), son of (his father): here is (a chicken, three chickens, a goat, an ox), healthy and unwounded, offered for this: (the request). The blood is for you, on the earth. The flesh is for us, at your table. Receive it, and carry the request before Him.

– May it be received.

3. The act. The sacrificer cuts the animal's throat in a single, clean gesture, the neck above the earth at the foot of the tree, so that the blood falls on the earth and nowhere else. He does not speak during the act. For a chicken, he holds the wings and the feet; for a goat or an ox, two or three appointed Kamites hold it, and the sacrificer alone cuts. The animal does not suffer more

than is necessary: a sacrifice badly done is done again on another animal, and the sacrificer who did it badly says so.

4. The sign. For a chicken, according to the custom of our villages, the sacrificer releases it on the earth and the circle watches how it comes to rest. If it dies on its back, the sacrificer says:

It is received.

— *It is received.*

If it dies on its belly or on its side:

It is not yet received. The request will be said again, at another moon, or otherwise.

— *We have heard.*

For a goat or an ox, the sign is read on the chickens that accompany it, one by one. A sign is not forced: one does not sacrifice a second animal the same evening to obtain another sign.

5. The blood and the earth. The sacrificer lets the blood run out entirely on the earth. He does not collect it, he does not put it on anyone, he marks nothing with it. He then pours a little water on the spot.

6. What follows. The following requests are made one after the other, from the smallest animal to the largest. The sacrificer washes his hands and the knife between each animal.

The sharing

Everything that was sacrificed is plucked or butchered, cooked and eaten on the spot, the same evening, by all who are there — Kamites, apprentices, guests presented by one of our own, and children. A share is set aside for those of the sanctuary who could not come, and carried to them the next day. Nothing is sold, nothing is kept beyond the next day, nothing is thrown away: what cannot be eaten is given. The sacrificer receives the head and a thigh of the largest animal, not as a wage, but as the share of the one who held the knife; the one who asked receives the liver; the queen mother receives what she designates for the women and children; and the rest belongs to all. The skins are given to those who work them.

The measure

The sacrificer knows the measure and enforces it: a chicken for a single person, three for a house, a goat and three chickens for a lineage or a sanctuary, an ox, three goats and nine chickens for the great request — that of the whole sanctuary, of the pilgrimage, or of the founding of a sanctuary. He refuses the sacrifice that exceeds the request, for one does not sacrifice to show one's wealth; and he refuses the sacrifice for harm, whatever the animal.

V. The Rites of Life: the Words of the Officiant

The second book said these rites as the house lives them. Here are the words of the sage, in the order in which they are inserted into

the cult, after the call of the lineages and before the libation of the sanctuary.

The child's name

> The father, or the mother, carries the child into the circle. The sage dips a finger in the water and lays it on the child's forehead.
>
> *Here is a child born of (the mother) and of (the father), (the date). He enters the lineage of (his father's father) and that of (his mother's mother). His name, in the language of (his mother, his father), is (the name). This name means: (the meaning). Ancestors, hear it: (the name).*
>
> *– He is named.*
>
> The parent pours for the child. The keeper enters the child with his name, his date, his mother's name and his father's.

The union

> The two stand at the centre of the circle, bare-chested or wrapper tied, their families behind each. The sage, to each, separately:
>
> *Is it you who choose, and no one else in your place?*
>
> *– It is I who choose.*
>
> *Has anyone paid for you, or been paid for you?*
>
> *– No one.*

Then, to both:

Then pour, each of you, for the Ancestors of the other.

Each pours the three liquids, naming the Ancestors of the other. Then the sage, to the woman, before her family:

The door of your natal house remains open, to you and to your children, whatever happens. Let those of your house say it.

– (Her family:) It remains open.

They are united, and entered in both names.

– They are united. Hotep.

The passage to the Ancestors

At the first full moon after the death. A relative of the dead person stands at the centre. The sage:

(The name of the dead person), son of (his father) and of (his mother), born (the date), passed (the date), is today named among the Ancestors of this sanctuary for the first time. Ancestors, he comes to you with his name. Receive him, and may he henceforth carry ours.

– He is named among them.

The relative pours the three liquids. The sage adds the name to the list of the Ancestors of the sanctuary, which will be read at the call from the following moon. The keeper writes: “passed to the Ancestors.”

The name given back

> July 25, day of the Door. The one who comes back was presented to his Ancestors on the day he arrived, according to the Fold; July 25 is the day when the name given back is said before all, if he wishes it. The jatigi of return presents him, bare-chested.
>
> *Here is (the name borne), come from (the city, the country), whose Ancestors crossed the door towards the sea. He is a Kamite in his own right, on his word of filiation. I answer for him on my name.*
>
> The sage, to the one who comes back:
>
> *You will keep the name of the shipwreck. Here is that of the shore, in the language of this sanctuary: (the name), which means (the meaning), of the lineage of (the lineage that adopts him, with the consent of its elders said before all, or the lineage found again). It is added to the name you bear; it does not abolish it. Ancestors, hear it: (the name).*
>
> *— He is named. He has come home.*
>
> The one who comes back pours. He is entered with his two names, if he wishes it, his lineage of adoption and his jatigi.

VI. The Threshold, the Passage and the Raising

The rites of the threshold and of the passage are given in books I and II, and the sage conducts them as they are written there. What

must be added here is what those books could not give: the rite by which a Kamite becomes a sage.

What is required

Thirty-six moons as a Kamite, entered. Three apprentices presented at the threshold and guided to the passage. Palavers sat as a witness, and at least one as an elder. A register kept, or a book of the homeland, or a register of voices, deposited and sealed. The word of the queen mother of the sanctuary, who says before all what is said of his name when he is not there. And the judgment of three sages, or of the Venerable, who have seen him hold the knife, say the words and keep silent.

The rite of raising

> July 24, day of the sages, at the sanctuary, before all. The Kamite stands bare-chested at the centre. The Venerable, or the eldest of the three sages:
>
> *Queen mother, what is said of his name when he is not there?*
>
> The queen mother answers, before all, in one sentence. If she says “wait,” one waits a year, without reproach.
>
> *Sages, have you seen him hold?*
>
> — *(The three sages:) We have seen him.*
>
> To the Kamite:
>
> *Do you know that you will not be paid?*
>
> — *I know it.*

Do you know that you will not be obeyed, but listened to, and that the queen mother will correct you in public?

– I know it.

Do you know that you will curse no one, that you will exclude no one, and that the door of your tree opens both ways?

– I know it.

Do you know that you will answer, on your name, for everything that happens under your tree?

– I know it. I answer for it.

The Venerable pours water on the Kamite's head, then puts into his hands the three vessels of the sanctuary.

You pour first. You say the words. You keep the register. You train those who will replace you. You are a sage.

– He is a sage. Hotep.

The new sage pours the libation of the sanctuary that day. He is entered "raised sage," with the names of the three sages and of the queen mother. What is passed on afterwards under the tree is passed on under the tree.

VII. Founding a Sanctuary

A sanctuary of the Bwa Sacré may be founded wherever three Kamites and a sage want it — on a hill in the country, in a courtyard in Abidjan, in a room in Paris or Bahia. It stands by seven things, and it is a sanctuary only when the seven are gathered and entered.

The earth. A place where one pours: a tree — baobab, kapok, shea, or the tree one has —, or a stone set on the bare earth, or, in town, a square of earth brought in, large enough to crouch on, in a courtyard or a room. The earth of the sanctuary of Lassa, or of a sanctuary already founded, is mixed into it at the foundation: a sanctuary is born of another.

The sage. A raised sage, who accepts the charge of this sanctuary and is entered there.

The queen mother. Designated among the founding women, for her name, before the first cult.

The register. A register opened at the date of the foundation, with the names of the founders, their lineages, the earth, and the name of the sanctuary from which the mixed earth comes. It is kept and sealed according to the next chapter.

The calendar. The sanctuary keeps the full moons and the five days, like all. It may hold cults of its own — the 1st, the 12th, the 23rd of Lassa, or others — which it enters, and which oblige no one.

The sacrificer. Appointed and trained by the sage, or the sage himself. A sanctuary may live without sacrifice as long as it has no sacrificer: it pours.

The declaration. The sanctuary is declared to the Bwa Sacré — its name, its place, its sage, its queen mother, its date, the earth from which it was born — and entered in the common register. If it keeps a wood or a land, it enters it in the book of the homeland and brings it to the knowledge of the land authorities of the place.

The rite of foundation

> At a full moon. The founders in a circle, bare-chested, around the earth. The sage mixes the earth brought from Lassa, or from a mother sanctuary, with the earth of the place.
>
> *This earth comes from (Lassa, or the mother sanctuary), where people poured before us. We mix it with this one, so that what was poured there may be poured here. Ancestors of (the mother sanctuary), Ancestors of those who are here – (he names the lineages of the founders) –, here is your new table.*
>
> The sage pours the three liquids. The queen mother pours. Each founder pours. Then, if there is a sacrificer, the great request: an ox, three goats and nine chickens, for the sanctuary being born; otherwise, what the sanctuary can, or nothing, for a sanctuary is founded by the libation, and the sacrifice follows when it can.
>
> *This sanctuary is founded. It is called (the name). It is entered.*
>
> *– It is founded. Hotep.*

VIII. The Register and the Seal

The register is what the sanctuary will leave. The sage answers for it, the keeper keeps it, and here is how.

What is written. At each cult: the Gregorian date and the Kamite year, the moon, those present, the requests carried, the sacrifices and their signs, and the rites held – thresholds, passages, names, unions, passages to the Ancestors, names given back, raisings,

foundations. Between the cults: the palavers, with the fault, the amends and the reintegration; the entries into and exits from the tontine; the entries in the book of the homeland; the deposits in the register of voices; the departures, without reproach. Each line bears a name, a date and the name of the one who writes.

What is not written. Nothing of what is passed on under the tree. No word of secret, no description of what is done outside the public circle, no name of one who asked that it not be written. The register is the book of what is done before all; it is not the book of what is kept silent.

How one seals. The register is kept on paper, by hand, and its page is signed by the sage and the queen mother at each cult. It is also kept in a digital copy — a photograph or a transcription of each page — and from this copy the keeper computes the fingerprint, which he anchors in the Bitcoin blockchain, as our writings are, at each full moon or at least each season. That is how the register of the smallest sanctuary has the same force as the seal of the Venerable: no one can rewrite it afterwards, nor claim that a line was or was not in it. The Bwa Sacré makes the method available to the sanctuaries, and trains the keepers: the sage who does not know how to do it finds a young Kamite who knows, and that is often his first charge.

Where it rests. The paper register stays at the sanctuary, safe from water and fire. The digital copy is deposited in the common register of the Bwa Sacré, and the recordings of the register of voices in an open repository, accessible to men and machines, according to “My Mother’s Tongue.” The book of the homeland is extracted from it

and brought to the land authorities, according to "The Written Land."

What does not go out. The register is communicated to no one from outside: it gives neither place, nor date, nor numbers, nor way, nor list, nor name. He who asks for them, were he one of our own, has designated himself.

The striking off. When the palaver has pronounced the striking off — the refusal to make amends, the sale of what is given — the sage writes it and says it aloud at the next cult: "So-and-so, son of so-and-so, is removed from the register of this sanctuary for this — not from the number of the Kamites, for no one cuts a man off from his lineage —, until amends." The line is not erased; the amends, when they come, are written beneath it and close it. Time alone closes nothing.

IX. The Five Days: the Officiant's Programme

The pilgrimage is the great work of the year, and the sage prepares it from the full moon of June. Here is the programme of each day, as it is held at the sanctuary.

July 21, day of the pregnant woman, the child to be born and the Queen Mothers. The evening cult is presided over by the queen mother, the sage at her left. After the call, she names the women of the sanctuary who are expecting a child, and pours for each; she names, by their name, the market women, the tontine mothers, the healers, the elder women; she names, with them, the women of the sanctuary who died in childbirth in the year, and the sanctuary pours for them. Then the queen mother gives an account

of the tontine before all. It is also on that day that the queen mother is designated, if the sanctuary does not yet have one.

July 22, day of the child. The sage names, one by one, all the children born in the year, with the rite of the name, even if they have already received it at a full moon: July 22 is the day when the whole year hears their names. The Kamites who have asked for a name in the language then receive it. The day belongs to the children: they eat first.

July 23, day of the Worker. The sage reads, before all, the name of each Kamite of the sanctuary and his year's work, and each answers "Present"; those who have no work are named too. The register of TRAVAILLEUR-0, where the sanctuary keeps it, is updated that day. The meal is offered by the sanctuary.

July 24, day of the sages. In the morning, the palaver of the year: everything that has not been settled under the tree during the year is brought there, and no one parts before the agreement. In the afternoon, the elders speak, and the young listen: it is the day of the register of voices, when recordings are made. In the evening, the raisings, according to chapter VI. The sage gives an account of the register before all.

July 25, day of the Ancestors and of the Door. The cult is the longest of the year. After the call, the sage reads the whole list of the Ancestors of the sanctuary, since the foundation, and adds those passed in the year. Then he names those who departed through the doors of no return — by the names the register knows, and by "those whose name we no longer have." Then the names given back, according to chapter V. Then the great libation: all pour, in order, and the sanctuary makes, if it can, its great request of the year, with

the sacrifice at its measure. Where a door exists, the sanctuary goes there that day, and crosses it in the direction of the land.

July 26. At dawn, the sage says before those who remain: “We are in *(the year)*.” The register of the year is closed and sealed. Work resumes.

During the five days, the sanctuary lodges and feeds those who come, according to djatiguiya: each pilgrim has a jatigi, and no one pays to sleep or to eat. Every pilgrim and every son of the return is received by day, before witnesses, unarmed, and his jatigi truly answers for him; where war is under way, one receives outside the village, and one takes the time needed before leading anyone to where the women, the children and the old are. The sanctuary that cannot offer everything says what it can, and those who come bring the rest. No one takes up a collection.

X. The Palaver: the Elder’s Protocol

“The Palaver Tree” instituted the palaver; here is how the elder holds it.

> 1. The summons. The fault being known, or at the request of one wronged, the elders summon: the offender, the victim, and their two lineages, on a fixed day, under the tree, outside the cult. No one is compelled to come; he who does not come is entered as not having come. Each party may challenge once without saying why; no accusation of witchcraft is received; a woman sits among the elders for any inheritance, widowhood or violence within the family.

2. The opening. The presiding elder pours water on the hands of all, and says: “We are under the tree. What is said here is said before the Ancestors. No one will leave before the agreement.”

3. The victim. She speaks first, as long as she wishes, without being interrupted. When she has finished, the elder asks: “Have you said everything?”

4. The offender. He answers, face to face, without lawyer or spokesman. Then his lineage speaks for him, if it wishes.

5. The witnesses. Each of those who saw speaks. An isolated accusation does not make an entry: the testimonies must agree. If an oath is needed, it is sworn before the earth, the hand upon it, and the elder says what it weighs.

6. The qualification. The elders withdraw, return, and say what the fault is, and what it is worth. What it is worth is paid to the victim, not to the sanctuary: a restitution, a sum, a work, animals, a public word.

7. The agreement. No one parts before the victim says “I am made whole” and the offender says “I will make amends.” If the night is needed, the night is taken.

8. The amends. They are made within the fixed time, before an elder, and they are entered.

9. The reintegration. At the full moon following the amends, before the circle, the elder says: “*(The name)* did wrong, he has made amends, he is reintegrated. His line is closed.” The assembly answers “It is closed,” one pours, and one eats together. He is no longer an offender: he is a man whose story is complete.

> 10. The striking off. He who refuses the amends pronounced, or who threatens the community by repeating his offence, is removed from the register of his sanctuary aloud, before all, and entered — not from the number of the Kamites, for no one cuts a man off from his lineage —, until amends. The removal is reversible by amends, never by time.

The elder listens more than he speaks. He never decides before the agreement. He enters everything. And he knows that he may himself be called under the tree, like the sage and like the Venerable: no one is above the palaver.

XI. Training the Apprentices: the Twelve Moons

The sage trains, and he trains through the jatigis. Here is what the apprentice receives at each moon, and what the jatigi gives him between two cults, under the tree or at home.

First moon. "The Secret Revealed." The word of dawn and the account of evening: the jatigi keeps them with him the first days. The name of the father and of the father's father.

Second moon. "The Invisible Ledger." What the name is. The apprentice begins his genealogy on paper, questioning the old.

Third moon. "The Sacred Protocols." Why the order of the cult does not change. The apprentice learns the answers of the circle by heart.

Fourth moon. “The Devil Always Wears Our Face” and “The Price of Silence.” The painted devil, the sacred, the secret. The apprentice learns what he will not ask for.

Fifth moon. “The House Without a Door.” Djatiguiya. The apprentice receives a guest at home, or is one.

Sixth moon. “The Feast of the Worker.” The five days. The apprentice learns the rule of 4236 and 4237, and he says the year.

Seventh moon. “The Kamite Pilgrimage.” The calendar, the moon, the portable sanctuary. The apprentice prepares his earth of the sanctuary.

Eighth moon. “My Mother’s Tongue.” The apprentice learns to greet, to count and to name his Ancestors in his mother’s tongue, and he records an elder.

Ninth moon. “The Queen Mothers.” The queen mother, the tontine, the net. The apprentice completes his genealogy through the mothers.

Tenth moon. “The Door of Return.” The return, the name given back. The apprentice learns the name of a departed Ancestor, if he has one, or names “those whose name we no longer have.”

Eleventh moon. “The Palaver Tree” and “The Written Land.” The palaver, the book of the homeland. The apprentice attends a palaver in silence, and he draws the boundaries of his lineage’s land.

Twelfth moon. “The Book of Answers.” The objections and their answers. The apprentice recites his lineage as far back as he can and the seven words before his jatigi, who decides whether he will present him for the passage.

The jatigi reports to the sage at each moon, in one sentence, and the sage enters it. An apprentice who has no jatigi does not advance; a jatigi who does not report is no longer a jatigi.

XII. The Rule of the Sage

The Kamite lives under the rule of the name. The sage lives under the same, and under seven consequences more, which are the charge.

The rule of the sage

One. I am not paid, neither to pour, nor to sacrifice, nor to name, nor to receive, nor to raise; I am entered.

Two. I change neither the order nor the words; what I say at Lassa is said in Bahia.

Three. I declare no war, I bless no weapon, I curse no one; but no one under my tree is under orders to let himself be killed, and I will never give that order. The only penalty of my tree is removal from the register of my sanctuary – not from the number of the Kamites, for no one cuts a man off from his lineage –, and it closes again by amends.

Four. I do not write the secret, and I do not sell it; I pass it on under the tree, at its hour, to the one who does not demand it.

Five. I hold the knife with respect, the register with exactness, and the door open both ways.

Six. I listen to the queen mother when she corrects me, and I go under the tree when I am called there: no one is above the palaver.

Seven. I train those who will replace me, and I plant a tree whose shade I will not see.

The sage who fails the rule is called under the tree by the queen mother or by three Kamites, and he answers there like any other. The sage who sells what is given is removed from the register of his sanctuary – not from the number of the Kamites, for no one cuts a man off from his lineage –, until amends, and his sanctuary passes to another sage, designated by the vote of the sages in the Bwa Sacré software, where each has his right of veto; the Venerable

appoints no one of his own accord, and the artificial intelligence does not vote: it holds the rule. There is no authority other than that one, and it has no force other than the name.

What We Institute

Let one measure the nature of this chapter, as for the writings that institute: it is not a proposal, it is a protocol, and it is executed — with its stages, its exact words, its witnesses who are all of you, and its definitive entry, the seal that timestamps this publication. According to our own teachings, when these four things are gathered, the change is not described: it is done.

Consequently, and from this day, the Bwa Sacré institutes what follows.

First, the charges. Every sanctuary names and enters its seven charges: the sage, the sacrificer, the queen mother, the elders of palaver, the keeper of the register, the keeper of the wood, the jatigis. The council meets under the tree after the full moon, and decides nothing against the palaver.

Second, the liturgy. The cult of the full moon is held according to the twelve stages of chapter III, with the words of the officiant written there, in the language of the sanctuary, without change of order or meaning.

Third, the sacrifice. It is done according to the protocol of chapter IV — the healthy animal, the presentation, the word, the clean act, the sign read and not forced, the blood to the earth, the whole sharing on the spot, the measure respected — by the sacrificer alone, never for harm, never for wealth.

Fourth, the rites of life and the raising. The name, the union, the passage to the Ancestors, the name given back, according to the words of chapter V; the raising of the sage according to chapter VI, on July 24, on the word of the queen mother and the judgment of three sages or of the Venerable.

Fifth, the foundation and the register. A sanctuary is founded by the seven things of chapter VII, with the earth of a mother sanctuary, and is declared. Its register is written, signed, sealed by a fingerprint anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain, and deposited according to chapter VIII; nothing secret enters it.

Sixth, the five days, the palaver and the training. The pilgrimage is held according to the programme of chapter IX, under djatiguiya, without collection; the palaver according to the ten stages of chapter X; and the apprentices are trained by the jatigis according to the twelve moons of chapter XI.

Seventh, the rule, freedom and the seal. The sage lives under the rule of chapter XII, he is above nothing, and his door opens both ways. Nothing of the foregoing is imposed on anyone, and freedom of conscience remains entire. The present book is signed electronically and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that the date on which the liturgy of the Bwa Sacré was written in its entirety before all is established for all and for ever.

Conclusion: the Shade

I sum up, so that it may be remembered and passed on.

Three books have been written, in three degrees, by a man, in his name, because God will send us neither book nor liturgy and He

gave us what we need to write them. The first answered the one who hesitated, and gave him the day, the moon, the year and the threshold. The second charged the one who had entered, and gave him his house, his rites, his part and his rule. This one gives the one who receives the charge everything that is said before all: the charges, the liturgy, the knife, the words of the passages, the raising, the foundation, the register and its seal, the five days, the tree, the twelve moons of the apprentice, and the rule of the sage. It does not give the secret, and it says so. We had no holy book: we now have a register written before all, dated, sealed, whose author is known, and which is held in the same way under the tree of Lassa and in a room in Bahia. We were reproached with having no liturgy: here it is, whole, and it requires neither mat, nor pew, nor tithe — water, milk, alcohol, earth, a knife held with respect, a register kept with exactness, and names.

This book has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

He who plants the baobab does not sit in its shade. Plant it all the same. That is the charge.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 17, 2026, in the year 6263 of the Kamite era.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré

— Chapter IV —

The Sacred Wood

Book of the Country — fourth of the Books of Lassa: why the Bwa Sacré, the Dogon neighbours, and the three ceremonies that make a man — teerobè, tchènirobè, bwan bèssi robè

Book instituted by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 5, 2026

Sanctuary of Lassa
year 6263 of the Kamite era

Preliminary Note

The Three Books of Lassa gave the Kamite the threshold, the libation and the baobab. They did not say where these came from. This fourth book says it. It answers a question raised as early as the first writing: why the Bwa Sacré? Why, in order to give a liturgy to all the Kamites of the world, go and fetch it from a small people of farmers without a king, between the Bani and the Volta, rather than from the great kingdoms whose names fill the books?

The answer lies in three ceremonies which have no equivalent in English and which this book therefore names in Bwamu: *teerobè*, the presentation to the Ancestors; *tchènirobè*, the entry into the bush, which is initiation; *bwan bèssi robè*, the release of the soul, which is the funeral and not the burial. The English names are only handles by which to grasp them. They remained intact until the war of 1915-1916, defended at every raid, when conversion by the blade had covered almost all the rest of the country, and it is they, seasoned to our taste for the age now beginning, that became the rites of the Three Books. This book describes them, says what we have kept of them, what we have changed, and why.

It also says two things the Bwa country had never written: why its chief is known to no one, and why the man who signs these books bears a title and not a name; what the Bwa Sacré imposes, in conscience, in order to open to women what custom kept among initiates; and how one presents oneself to the fetish when one has neither a genealogy nor a name from the tradition. It speaks, finally, of the Dogon neighbours, whom the world knows because they were written. What is secret is not in it; what is in it can be verified.

I. Opening: the Name of a People, the Name of a Wood

I have often been asked whether the Bwa Sacré takes its name from the sacred wood — that grove set apart from the village where the cults are held and which no one enters without reason — or from the Bwa people, of whom I am one. The answer is: from both, and it is not a play on words. Among the Bwa the sacred wood is not scenery: it is the place where the three ceremonies of this book are performed, outside the village, in the bush, where the Ancestors receive. To name the institution after the wood was to name it after what it does; to name it after the people was to say where it gets what it does. The two names overlap because, among us, the people and the wood have never been separated: every Bwa village has, to this day, its sacred forest. One enters it to present, to initiate, to release; one does not cut there, hunt there or build there; and when everything else has changed — the roofs, the roads, the telephones — the wood has stayed in its place, at the edge, like the memory of the village. It is from that forest that the Bwa Sacré takes its name, and it is that forest which *The Written Land* wished to enter in the register of the homeland, so that no cadastre should take it for waste ground.

The Bwa number some three hundred thousand, the books say, divided between Mali — around San and Tominian — and Burkina Faso — around Dédougou and Houndé. They speak Bwamu, a Voltaic language, different from that of their Bobo neighbours, which is Mande, and different from that of their Dogon neighbours. They have never had a king. Each village governs itself through the assembly of its quarter heads, elders none of whom commands

alone, and who deliberate: this is the palaver tree, which I have described elsewhere, and which is among us the only visible form of power. It has always been said that the Bwa have no chief, and we say it ourselves: amen. Chapter III will say what that sentence keeps. They are farmers, blacksmiths, brewers of dolo. They have given the art of the world masks of leaves and plank masks more than two metres tall, covered with signs the initiates know how to read. And they remained, until a date this book will fix precisely, a people of the religion of the Ancestors, when almost everything around them had taken the turban or the cross.

That is why the Bwa Sacré. Not because the Bwa would be better than others — this book will say it without varnish: we have no kingdom, no ancient script, no pyramids, and the world does not know us. But because among them, what Kamites everywhere are trying to recover — the rite of the name, the rite of passage, the rite of departure — did not have to be recovered: it was still there, whole, in the mouths of the old and in the wood, when I was a child. One does not rebuild a liturgy from books written by others when one can take it at the source. The source was two steps from my hut. This book describes it.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

II. A Country Spared, Until 1916

It must first be said why Bwa custom was intact: it is a geography, and it is above all a history of fighting.

Islam came into the bend of the Niger through the merchants and through the empires — Ghana, Mali, Songhai — then through the

jihads of the nineteenth century, which made Macina and Ségou into Muslim states. The great towns, the trade routes, the royal courts were won first. But between the Bani and the Volta stretched a country without a king, without a town and without a road, whose villages had neither wall nor gate – they still have none – and which guarded themselves by watchmen in the trees and by men who fought at every raid. The horsemen passed through to take captives; they paid for every captive, and they converted no one. The Bwa, like their Bobo, Samo and Dogon neighbours, held on to their cults. What the kingdoms lost, the villages without a king kept. It is a lesson *The House Without a Door* has already drawn, and which this book confirms: the absence of a State is not always a weakness; among us it was the condition of preservation.

Then came the French conquest, at the end of the nineteenth century, and with it, for twenty years, a distant administration that took the tax and left the customs. The Bwa country went on living as before, with a district commandant at San and at Dédougou. And then there was the war.

In November 1915, in the Marka village of Bona, fifty kilometres south of Dédougou, men come from the whole region refused the forced recruitment of soldiers for the war in Europe, and they took up arms. What the colonial archives called the "Bobo-Oulé revolt" – the name others gave the Bwa – was in reality a war of the whole country: Marka, Bwa, Bobo, Samo, Minianka, Fulani, Nuna, Lela, Winye, eight to nine hundred thousand people, united not by an ethnic group but by alliances of villages and ties of kinship, which astonished the French. One of the leaders of the insurrection, at Bona, explained their reason in a sentence the historians have preserved: the Whites ridicule and forbid our customs and the

sacred things inherited from our ancestors. The historians describe a war of fortified villages – the *tata* of the Marka of Bona, held, lost, rebuilt; the Bwa villages, for their part, had no walls, and it was in the open that they held, and burned. France committed five thousand soldiers, six cannon and four machine-gun sections – the largest forces and the most powerful armament ever employed until then in French West Africa. From February to September 1916, the columns methodically destroyed the villages, shelled the walls, looted the granaries, took hostages. More than a hundred villages razed, according to the colonial reports; tens of thousands of dead, say the historians, almost all of them men of eighteen to thirty-five, which hollowed out the villages for a generation. A son of the country, Nazi Boni, later made a novel of it, *Crépuscule des temps anciens* – the first novel of what was to become Burkina Faso: the title says everything.

What the historians write, the families tell differently, and the two accounts must stand here side by side, for they do not contradict each other. Here is what was handed down among us. The colonizer arrived in the village and asked who the chief was; he was pointed out; he was shot. The old, who could no longer withdraw, were killed. Then came the missions, and on Sunday the old men who had not gone to mass were made to kneel on the village square, and in the end they were killed in the evening; the only escape was for a priest – white, he too – to come and say that this old man was a good Christian. It is men and an administration that memory accuses, not a faith. The historians confirm the substance: after 1916 the administration abandoned the policy that respected customs, and resistance could take only roundabout forms.

What put an end to our resistance was not the valour of the adversary: it was that our base was pointed out, by people we let move about on our markets when we knew they served as auxiliaries in the column opposite. I accuse no people: the lesson is on us. Our hospitality seemed to us more important than our safety, and we paid for it with a war and four generations of exile.

That is the date. Until 1915 the Bwa country lived its three ceremonies whole. After 1916 it hid them. It did not lose them: it put them in safety, as one puts seed in safety, and that is why, fifty years later, a child could still see them performed in the wood. But it put them in safety at the price of a generation not presented, not initiated, buried without its name — and that price I have paid myself, as I have said elsewhere. It is from this country, spared and then wounded, that the Bwa Sacré comes: from a custom our fathers held with weapons in hand against the raids, and by silence against colonization, and which was waiting for the war measure to be lifted.

III. The Chief Nobody Knows

It has always been said that we have no chief. I say it too, and I say amen to it: it is the sentence the Bwa country holds out to whoever asks, and it has protected lives. But I must now write what it keeps, without giving up anything of what it protects, for it explains the name under which this book is signed. Since the war, if you go to the Bwa country, you may live there thirty years as a civil servant without knowing the chief. Too many chiefs were killed: the colonizer asked who the chief was, he was pointed out, he was shot. But let no one believe the war invented what follows: the custom of

never pointing out the chief is older than the colonizer, and the colonizer only exacerbated it. Since the time of the empire of Ghana, more than a thousand years ago, we were thus, and for a reason the tradition states plainly: it did not allow the chief to die by accident. The chief had to die a natural death, and have time to transmit. Now a known chief may die of an arrow, of a poison or of a bullet, and take with him what he has not had time to give; an unknown chief dies in his bed, and the transmission is made. It was the raids of the conquering States that jostled us first; the colonizer finished the work. The Bwa country therefore has protocols that never point out the chief. There is a chief for the administration, who plays the part of chief before the administration, and who plays it so well that even the women who have come to marry into the village do not know the real chief – they do not even know that they do not know him. Tell them they are ignorant of who the chief is: they answer "here he is," and point to the copy. The real chief is known only to the initiates. They have sworn to tell no one, and the old hold them, as they hold the name of the spirit: the secret is well kept, and has been for far longer than the war.

We are called a people without a chief, hence disorderly. Let it be said: what the tradition protects remains within the tradition, and as long as we are believed to have no chief, we have everything. Looked at as an engineer, it is a two-headed system of which only one head is visible, and it is the safest of all. He who wants to strike the head strikes the decoy; the decoy is replaceable; the real head appears in no register the enemy can read. The lesson is that of *The Price of Silence*: a declared strategy of protection is a dead strategy, and our old men, who had read no white paper, had long held what network designers call an architecture without a single point of

failure; 1916 only proved its worth. That colonization came to an end did not end the protocol: neocolonialism too has its district commandants, and one does not disarm a defence that has proved itself because the enemy has changed costume.

That is why I have never known anything but chiefs nobody knows, and that is why I want to be an unknown guardian. KING BAZURU is not my name: it is the title of all the chiefs of the Kamites, and that is why all the writings of this series are signed thus. At my death there will be another KING BAZURU, whom no one will know. From his enthronement, the keeper of the register, whose entries the artificial intelligence keeps, announces only: we have a new KING BAZURU. That is all. And he will bear the title all his life, in anonymity if he so wishes: I keep myself hidden for reasons that are my own, and this discretion is a protection, not an obligation of the charge; whoever comes after me and chooses to appear openly shall have the full right to do so. He will guard, arbitrate and speak under that title, as the chief of my village does behind his copy. I will be told it is a Freemason's idea. It has served the Freemasons very well; why not us, whose initiation societies existed long before the lodges? What we borrow from them is not the idea: it is the proof that it holds at the scale of the world. The idea is from our own country, and it is older than their lodges.

Let one measure what this changes for the Kamites. A known chief can be bought, flattered, threatened, killed, or simply worn out by the cameras; an unknown chief can only be followed or not followed, on what he writes and on what he makes hold. The title carries the authority, the man carries the burden, and the death of the man undoes nothing: another takes the title, and the registers go on. It is the most Bwa of all the institutions this book describes,

and it is the one the Bwa Sacré gives to the Kamites of the world to hold the age now beginning.

IV. The Neighbours: Two Kilometres Away, the Dogon

From the village where I grew up, one walks less than two kilometres and one is in Dogon country. There is neither border nor river: a field, a path, and the same granaries. The Dogon are, with the Bobo and the Samo, our nearest neighbours, and we have lived side by side since the empire of Ghana: where we are today is only history — the Dogon arrived in Dogon country long afterwards, they were elsewhere before, and so were we. Since that time we have shared markets, marriages, famines and ceremonies. One thing, however, separates us: among them, the imported religions have won a large share of the villages; in mine, to this day, you will not find a single mosque. I judge no Dogon for that: I measure what a single factor does, writing. This neighbourhood is the second reason for this book, for it allows one to measure it on two almost identical peoples.

The whole world knows the Dogon. Since the ethnologist Marcel Griaule settled at Sangha, on the Bandiagara escarpment, with the Dakar-Djibouti mission of 1931, then published *Masques dogons* in 1938 and *Dieu d'eau* in 1948 — his conversations with old Ogotemmêli, whose cosmogony fascinated Europe — the Dogon have become the most studied, most photographed, most visited African people. The *kanaga* mask figured on the flag of French Sudan, then of the Mali Federation. Researchers have since disputed Griaule,

but the very dispute added to the fame. The Dogon were written, and they exist for the world.

The Bwa, two kilometres away, were not written, or so little. Jean Capron published in 1973 the first volume of *Communautés villageoises bwa*, and the sequel is still awaited; a few articles have appeared on the leaf masks of Bondoukuy and on the personal names of the San country; that is about all. No tourist climbs to see our masks come out. No flag carries our signs. And yet, look at what we share.

The Dogon have the *dama*: the lifting of mourning, the ceremony at which the masks of the Awa society come out to call the souls of the dead and send them to join the Ancestors. We have *bwan bèssi robè*, which does exactly that. The difference is one of organization, and it is instructive: the Dogon perform the dama collectively, every three years – sometimes five – for all the deaths since the last one, in three days of dances; we perform it individually, for one dead person, when the family is ready. They pool; we personalize. The Dogon have the *kanaga*, that double-cross mask which the initiates read as an account of the creation and the others as a bird, and they have tall masks – the *sirige*, the storeyed house, and masks mounted on stilts. We have *oro lainu*, our tall masks on stilts, which likewise have no equivalent in English, and our plank masks that exceed two metres. The Dogon have the mask society, the Awa, which the circumcised enter; we have *tchènirobè*, the initiation in the bush, which teaches the masks along with the rest. The Dogon have the *togu-na*, the men's shelter where one deliberates without being able to stand up; we have the palaver tree and the assembly of quarter heads.

One thing more, worth all the proofs of chapter III. There are not today two Dogon villages that speak the same language: from one village to the next they no longer understand each other and speak to one another in Fulfulde. We speak the same Bwamu from Djibasso to Ségou, over several hundred kilometres. A people without a chief that keeps a single language over hundreds of kilometres for centuries: let one think about it. Reputedly without a chief. Two peoples, one grammar. The world has read one of them, and believes the other does not exist. That is what writing does, and that is why I am not content to practise: I write. *Before the Greeks, Before Rome* said what happens to a people that leaves no one to write — the Etruscans, whose prayers no one pronounces any more. I do not need to go as far as Italy to verify it: I need only look across the field. The Dogon are our brothers, and this book takes nothing from them; it says only that we know the same custom, and that we have seasoned it to our taste.

V. Teerobè: the Presentation to the Ancestors

What the three ceremonies have in common

Before describing them one by one, one must see what binds them, for none of the three can be understood without the other two.

All three are held outside the village, in the wood, in the sanctuaries. The village is the place of the living among themselves; the wood is the place where the living meet those who no longer are. One does not present a child to the Ancestors on the market square; one does not become a man in one's mother's courtyard; one does not release a soul beside its grave.

All three bear on the same thing: the spirit of man. Among the Bwa, man is not alone. He has a spirit, a soul, which does not die, which lives with him and which continues the adventure after death. *Teerobè* gives this spirit a name. *Tchènirobè* makes the child a man, that is, someone whose spirit henceforth has duties. *Bwan bèssi robè* calls this spirit by its name and tells it to go. The three ceremonies are the three entries of a single register, the one I have elsewhere called the invisible ledger: the inscription, the update, the closure.

And all three obey the rule *The Sacred Protocols* brought to light: stages, witnesses, exact words, a definitive entry. One does not skip initiation to go to the funeral; one does not perform the funeral of someone who was not presented without a particular ceremony, as will be seen for the eldest; and what was done in the wood is not undone. The whole village changes its conduct towards the one who has passed. These are not feasts: they are acts.

The presentation

Teerobè is the first of the three, and the most discreet. It gives the child's spirit its name, and it inscribes the child in the lineage before those who keep it.

It takes place at any age. One presents an infant as one presents a grown man; what matters is not the age but the fact of being presented. The person concerned does not attend the ceremony. It is held in the bush, in the sanctuary, and he is represented there by a twig that his father or his uncle has handed over. Whether he is in the village, in Paris, in Montreal or in Bahia, it is the same: the twig stands for him. When his turn comes, the twig is presented to the Ancestors, a name is given to his spirit, and that name is pro-

nounced once only, before the elders. It will never again be pronounced in his lifetime. The person concerned does not know it and will never know it: only those who were there know it.

This name has one use, and one only: death. It is the name by which, at *bwan bèssi robè*, his soul will be called to be told to go. But it must also be said, because custom says it, that this name is a point of weakness: whoever knows it can reach the person by calling his spirit, wherever he may be. This is what kept people wise and respectful of custom for generations – they knew the old could reach them – and it is also what, the day people stopped fearing the old, caused parents to stop presenting their children. One last feature reveals the depth of the arrangement. When the oldest person in the village dies, the funeral includes a special ceremony, because no one in the village knows his sacred name any longer: all those who had heard it died before him. One then says: it is so-and-so, father of so-and-so, elder brother of so-and-so. Custom knew a key can be lost, and had provided how to call a soul by its filiation.

Looked at with an engineer's eyes, *teerobè* is three things at once, and each is admirable. It is an inscription in the register of the lineage, independent of place: the twig is a representation at a distance, and our old men, without knowing it, had invented the proxy for a people that had no writing. It is a key, entrusted to custodians and not to its holder, with a single use: release. And it is a degraded mode, provided in advance, for the case where the key should be lost. When I instituted, in *The Door of Return*, the name given back to the Kamites of the diaspora on July 25, before witnesses, with a jatigi who answers for them, I invented nothing: I found *teerobè* again, and its twig that stands for the child of Bahia as for the child of the village.

What Lassa keeps of it

The Bwa Sacré keeps *teerobè* as it is, and opens it to all: to Kamites everywhere, to those of the diaspora, to whoever asks for it through a father, an uncle or a jatigi. The twig, the sanctuary, the name pronounced once before the elders and never revealed to the person concerned: nothing is touched, for that is the strength of the rite. Two things only are added, and they are said aloud. The first is the rule of the single name: the name of the spirit is used only once, at death, to release the soul; to use it otherwise is a fault, and that fault is entered in the invisible ledger, that of the Ancestors, which keeps the accounts of the old as of the young. It is not written in the register of the sanctuary, it is not brought under the tree, and no one may accuse a man of having reached another through his name: that accusation is received by no palaver. The second is the written register: the presentation is entered — the name borne, the date, the lineage, the sanctuary — without the name of the spirit, which is not written, so that no child presented may one day be forgotten, and so that he who is far away may prove that he was.

> In the wood, before the elders. The father, the uncle or the jatigi holds out the twig.
>
> *Here is the twig of (the name borne), child of (the mother) and of (the father), of the lineage of (the lineage), who lives at (the place). I present him to the Ancestors in his stead, as our fathers presented theirs.*
>
> The elder receives the twig, presents it to the Ancestors, and pronounces the name of the spirit once only, in a low voice, before the elders alone. Then, aloud:

> *He is presented. The Ancestors know him. This name will be said only once more, on the day he departs; whoever said it before that day would enter it against himself in the invisible ledger.*
>
> *– He is presented.*
>
> The uncle, or the father, or the jatigi, spits on the twig before holding it out: that is how the absent one is recognized. The parent pours. The keeper enters the presentation, without the name of the spirit.

VI. Presenting Oneself to the Fetish: the Spittle, and the Names One Does Not Have

Here one must pause on something that keeps many of our own from coming to the sanctuary, and settle it once and for all. I am told: I do not know my genealogy; my parents themselves bear Muslim names; how am I to present myself to the Ancestors, I who cannot name my own? Among many Kamites, conversion by the blade swallowed everything – the names, the lineages, the memory of the villages – and what remains are men and women who would like to come and who stay outside, because they believe one needs a name from the tradition and ten generations to cross the threshold. I, for my part, can recite my lineage over ten generations, from Sounlé, born around 1812, to my son; few Kamites can, and it is not their fault. Let it be said plainly, and let our newcomers not be made to feel inferior: Muslim names, or no name at all, pose no problem whatever. One enters the sanctuary with the name one has.

I begin with old Sounlé, born around 1812, come from what is today Mali, settled around 1834 in what is today Burkina Faso, where he founded his village. My lineage tells the road, and it is the same as that of the Dogon neighbours: together we left the empire of Ghana – Koumbi Saleh, today in Mauritania –, then Guinea, then Mali, then Burkina Faso; here I am in Côte d'Ivoire. We never left a land without having given battle. Each departure was a withdrawal after combat, in good order, with the children, the old who knew, and the objects of the cult; and if in a thousand years no one has succeeded in converting us, it is not because our legs were fast: it is because we cost dearly every time. The last of my lineage to have remained wholly Bwa is my great-grandfather, born in 1912. The rest, we know: the war passed that way, and it is not over, since it goes on in other clothes.

I take the occasion to recall that Sundiata Keita stopped the second blade by a pact, and that he was right; he did not see that the blade would return; and to name the one I have not managed to forgive to this day: Kankou Moussa, who committed, in my eyes, the gravest fault a chief has ever committed against his own. Two birds with one stone: he squandered the gold of the empire on the road to Mecca, and, as if that were not enough, he turned the lights of the whole world on the riches of this region. The consequence, we are still in it: the most coveted land has remained the most wretched, all humanity, come running, brought us back to the age of chipped stone, the exodus has never stopped, and the empire has been reduced, to this day, to the servitude of the imported religions. Look at Koumbi Saleh, in Mauritania: it is pitiful.

For custom had provided something better than genealogy, and it must be reported as it is, even if we shall be told, as usual, that we

are dirty. We, to present ourselves to the fetish, spat on it. One spits on the fetish, where the blood is poured, and the fetish recognizes the person, automatically, without any great introduction. We ourselves thought it the best way, and here is why. One sometimes believes oneself the son of such a man, and it is false: a mother may have lied, at one generation or another, and the whole genealogy recited since rests on that lie. Before the fetish, the lie has no place. Through the spittle – through what science today calls DNA – it knows at once who is concerned, without error; and if there has been a lie, it will know, and it will keep the secret, which at times we ourselves do not know. We were told we were dirty because of the blood; it will be said because of the spittle. We know it is the best way to present oneself to the fetish, because it is the only one that cannot lie.

The spittle, then, is the presentation, and it takes all its forms. He who is present spits on what he brings to the fetish – the chicken, the goat, the ox – before the blood is poured: that is how he presents himself. He who is absent is presented by the twig, and it is the uncle, the father or whoever represents him who spits on the twig, for the presentation to the Ancestors as for the entry into the bush; he who carries the chicken for another spits in his place. No one has anything to recite. No one has to prove whose son he is: the fetish knows it better than he does. The register enters what it is given – the name one bears, be it Muslim, the place one comes from, the date – without demanding anything more. Genealogy, when one has it, is a wealth, and one may deposit it in the register as I deposited mine; when one does not have it, the spittle makes up for it, and it does not err.

And a rule of the tradition must be written here that will surprise those from outside, because it settles in advance what the modern world calls trust. When one is not there, one entrusts the sacrifice to someone. From the moment it is entrusted, the sacrifice is deemed done, and it is valid – even if the one to whom it was entrusted diverted the money, even if one knows he drank dolo or ate meat with it instead of killing the animal. That is our tradition. Whether I am in the village and entrust a chicken to a relative, or in Abidjan and send the money by telephone to someone for a sacrifice, my sacrifice is done the instant I entrusted it, and I have no need to worry about it; if he does not do it, even if I am informed of it, it no longer concerns me: it is he who will pay the price. Let one look at what this rule accomplishes. It frees the giver from all supervision; it lays the fault on the only one who committed it; and it makes sacrifice possible at a distance, from any city in the world, without any intermediary being able to hold the donor hostage. It is the invisible ledger that keeps guard: the embezzler is entered in the invisible ledger, and he knows it. The Bwa Sacré holds this rule as it is.

Another rule says where the sacrifice begins, and it can be checked at the market. One does not bargain over the price of a sacrificial animal. I go to the market, I look, say, for a black cock; I see it; I ask how much. If he says three thousand francs and I have only two thousand five hundred, I go elsewhere – and even if he calls me back to let me have it for two thousand five hundred, I can no longer accept. One pays the price given, or one goes elsewhere. For the Ancestors see what one is doing: the sacrifice has already begun when one goes to pay for the animal, and to haggle over the price of the animal is to fail in respect towards the Ancestors. The rite does

not begin under the tree: it begins at the market, at the first word one speaks about the animal. The Bwa Sacré holds this rule too, and asks it of all its sanctuaries.

The rope must be told too, for it is the language in which one promises. When one slaughters a goat or an ox, the last rope that held the animal — the one that was on it when it was slaughtered — stays on the fetish. That is why one promises a rope when one comes to ask something of the Ancestors: to promise a rope is to promise a goat or a sheep; to promise horns is to promise an ox, even if the horns themselves do not stay on the fetish. But most of the time one calmly promises a chicken, because it is not dear and it is easy to find, and the promise is worth no less for that. What counts is not the size of the beast: it is to keep one's word. To promise and not to do is catastrophe. No one will pursue you for it; the Ancestors will correct you themselves. The fetish is a register of promises, and the rope that stays on it is the written record of those that were kept.

And it happens that one asks, and that the Ancestors refuse flatly. It is because they see things we do not yet see. One may come and tell them one's disappointment, one's disagreement: there will be no trouble, one does not fall out with one's own for having spoken. But that will not make them change their mind. They know things we do not, and since they are people who want only our good, they can never agree to do what they know to be bad for us in the long run. That is the whole relationship, and it fits in few words: one asks, one promises, one pays the price without bargaining, one keeps what one promised, and one accepts the no as one accepts the yes — because it comes from those who went before us and who await us.

VII. Tchènirobè: the Entry into the Bush

Tchènirobè is the second ceremony, and the longest: it is initiation, at puberty, the one that makes a child a man. It takes place in the bush, and it has a particularity I have found nowhere else in this form: one enrols oneself.

No one enrols you for *tchènirobè*. Neither your father, nor the village, nor the elders. You alone can do it, by giving a chicken to an uncle, who will actually enrol you. The chicken is the price of the certificate, and the uncle is its witness: in receiving it, he attests before the others that you have asked to pass. Then, when the day comes, you go into the bush with those of your age, and the training is complete: war, the masks, the tradition, everything a man must know to hold his place in the village and in the wood. There one learns to read the signs of the masks – those zigzags which are the path of the Ancestors, those chequerboards which are knowledge and ignorance – one learns the words that are not said elsewhere, in the village, one learns to fight and to obey, and one comes back a man. The village, which saw children leave, welcomes men, and changes its conduct towards them overnight.

Let one look at what the chicken does. Among most peoples, initiation is imposed by the age class: one goes because one is of age, whether one wants to or not. Among us, one goes because one asked for it, and paid to ask. Consent is at the start of the rite, as it is at the heart of our marriage – *The Stealers of Women* showed it for the elopement. The child who gives his chicken to his uncle does exactly what the Kamite who presents himself at the threshold will do later: he declares that he wants to pass, before a witness who will no longer let him draw back. And the knowledge one then receives

is not a course: it is a charge. War, the masks and the tradition are the three things a village without a king must entrust to each man, since it has no one else to entrust them to. That is why the training is complete: in a country without a State, every initiate is the State.

The Dogon, two kilometres away, have the Awa, the mask society, which the circumcised enter and which holds the dama; and they have, every sixty years, the Sigui, at which a new mask is carved and the initiates speak a secret language. The structure is the same as ours — separation, ordeal, secret, return, which *The Sacred Protocols* described as the universal mechanics of transformation. What we add to it is the chicken: the door opens from the inside.

What Lassa keeps of it

Tchènirobè is the direct source of *The Threshold*, the first of the Books of Lassa. The apprentice is not enrolled there by his family but by himself, with a chicken handed to the one who will become his jatigi, before witnesses; it is the uncle's chicken. The twelve moons of training are the bush: the reading of the twelve writings, moon after moon, the learning of the words and gestures, the ordeal before the circle. What changes is said frankly. The bush has become the sanctuary, because our apprentices live in Abidjan, in Paris and in Bahia, and one cannot take an accountant from Montreal into the wood for six weeks. War is no longer taught with weapons: it is taught with answers — *The Book of Answers* is our combat training, for that is where our own are attacked today — and with the rules of safety, for it is forbidden to get oneself killed. The masks are taught, not worn: their signs, their meaning, their coming out, so that the apprentice who sees *oro lainu* come out knows what he is seeing. And the tradition is taught as it is written here. The

secret of the bush is not in the book; what is passed there from mouth to ear stays from mouth to ear, at Lassa, under the tree.

> He who wants to pass brings a chicken to the one he has chosen as jatigi, before two witnesses.
>
> *I give you this chicken so that you enrol me. No one sends me: I ask to pass.*
>
> He who asks spits on the chicken, if he is there; if he is far away, the one who carries the chicken for him spits in his place. The jatigi receives the chicken.
>
> *I receive it, and I enrol you. You will draw back no more, and I will answer for you on my name until you have passed.*
>
> *– He is enrolled.*
>
> The chicken is sacrificed under the tree at the following moon, according to *The Baobab*. The keeper enters the apprentice, his jatigi and the date. The twelve moons begin.

VIII. Bwan bèssi robè: the Release of the Soul

Bwan bèssi robè is the third ceremony, and the one least understood by those who come from elsewhere, because they confuse it with the burial. The funeral has nothing to do with the burial. One buries quickly, as everywhere: the blacksmiths wash the dead man, dig the grave in the compound, lay him down; it is a matter of days. The funeral comes much later – months, sometimes years – when the family is ready, and it is another matter: it is the day one releases the soul.

For between the burial and the funeral, the dead man has not left. His spirit is still there, with the living, in the house and in the village; people testify to having seen him after the hour of his death, and no one among us is surprised at it. He is waiting to be spoken to. *Bwan bèssi robè* is the day he is spoken to. His spirit is called by the name given to it at *teerobè* – that name which has not been pronounced since – and it is told three things, in this order. That nothing is held against him. That he may leave the village in peace. That he may go to the village of the Ancestors without fear, and that he is awaited there. He is reassured, encouraged, the road is opened to him. Then the masks come out – it is the day of *oro lainu*, the tall masks on their stilts, and of the plank masks – and the village dances, not to weep but to accompany. When the ceremony is done, the dead man has arrived, and the living may live. The name of the ceremony speaks of a laying-out of tree trunks, and English cannot say that; let it be kept in Bwamu, as the djatiguiya and the jatigi were kept, and let it be called, when an English word is needed, the release of the soul – for that is what it does.

What the modern world has made of death, *The Sacred Protocols* described: an hour of formality, then a mourning that never ends, and consultations to accompany it, where one rediscovers one by one and at an hourly rate what our funerals carry out in community. The dead man dispatched has never left; he wanders in the house of the living. Our old men knew it: they had separated the burial, which is for the body, and the funeral, which is for the spirit, and they had given the second the time it needs. It is the release protocol, the last entry in the register: one leaves the register of the living to enter the council of the Ancestors, and a commit of that importance is not made lightly.

The Dogon do this collectively: the dama, every three or five years, for all the dead since the last one, in three days — the day the masks meet the Ancestors, the day of the dances, the day of closure. It is a fine solution: it shares the cost. We do it individually, death by death, when the family is ready, and that too has a reason: each soul is called by its name, and not from a list. The two neighbours solved the same problem by two paths, and neither is wrong.

What Lassa keeps of it

Bwan bèssi robè is the source of the passage to the Ancestors in *The Baobab*, and of its rule: at the first full moon after death, the dead man is named among the Ancestors of the sanctuary, and his name is read at the roll-call from the following moon. But the rite of *The Baobab* was incomplete, and this book completes it. It lacked the words to the soul — the pardon, the permission, the encouragement — and it lacked the time. The Bwa Sacré therefore institutes *bwan bèssi robè* as a rite distinct from the burial, performed at the sanctuary, at the request of the heir and when the family is ready, individually, for one dead person. What changes is said: the ceremony is performed at the nearest sanctuary, whichever it may be, and not only in the native village, for our dead die in Abidjan and in Paris; it must not ruin the living — *The Sacred Protocols* said it, keep the protocol, prune the ornament, for no Ancestor wants to settle on the ruin of his children; and where the name of the spirit has been lost — the generation of 1916, those who were not presented — one does as for the eldest, and calls the soul by its filiation. The dead man has not left any the less for that. He has left under the name of his fathers.

> At the sanctuary, when the family is ready. The heir stands in the centre. The elder calls the spirit of the dead man by the name of *teerobè*, once, in a low voice; or, if it is lost, by his filiation, aloud:
>
> *(The name), son of (his father), brother of (his brothers), father of (his children). We call you. Listen.*
>
> Then, aloud, to the spirit:
>
> *We hold nothing against you. What you owed, you gave; what you could not, we carry. You may leave this village in peace. The road is open, and those who left before you await you. Go to the Ancestors without fear, and may they receive you with your name.*
>
> *— Go in peace. We hold nothing against you.*
>
> The heir pours the three liquids. The masks come out, if the sanctuary has them. The keeper writes: “released,” with the date. The name is read at the roll-call of the Ancestors from the following moon.

IX. The Masks: oro lainu, the Great Stilt-Walkers, and kanaga

A chapter is needed for the masks, because they are what the world sees of us — in the museums, where our plank masks are sold under the name of our Bobo neighbours — and what it understands least.

A mask is not a disguise. Among the Bwa as among the Dogon, he who wears the mask is no longer himself: he is what the mask shows, and those who look at him know they are looking at a spirit,

not a neighbour. The masks come out at funerals, at initiation, at the feasts of the dry season, never without reason. The Bwa have two families of masks. The leaf masks belong to the cult of Do, the eldest son of the creator, sent to speak to men: these are masks the bush itself supplies, made of leaves and fibres, which return to the earth after the ceremony. The wooden masks — the tall planks, the animals, the faces — are covered with signs that initiation teaches one to read: the zigzag is the path of the Ancestors, which is never straight; the chequerboard says knowledge and ignorance, light and shadow; the crescent, the moon of the cult. A plank mask is a book, and *tchènirobè* is the school where one learns to read it.

And there is *oro lainu*. These are our tall masks, mounted on stilts, which tower over the crowd at funerals and dance above the heads. English has no word for them; let the Bwamu be kept, and let one say, if a translation is needed, the great stilt-walkers. The Dogon, across the field, also have masks on stilts, and they have the *sirige*, the storeyed house, that plank several metres long which the dancer swings down to the ground. And they have the *kanaga*, the double cross, which the initiates read as the gesture of the creator ordering the world and which the others see as a bird, and which ended up on a flag. We have no flag, but the same heights, the same stilts, the same way of bringing the sky down onto the square on the day a soul departs.

The Bwa Sacré teaches the masks to its apprentices and brings them out in its sanctuaries when it has them — at Lassa, at *bwan bèssi robè*. It imposes them on no sanctuary that has no tradition of them: the words suffice. But it refuses to have them called folklore, and it refuses to have them sold. A mask that has danced for a dead man is not an object: it is a witness, and one does not sell witnesses.

X. Seasoned to Our Taste: the Adaptations for the Age of Aquarius

It must now be said, in a single chapter and without detour, what the Bwa Sacré has changed in the three ceremonies, for one day we shall be reproached with having betrayed them, and it is better that the list of changes be written by us. We know the custom. We have seasoned it to our taste, to adapt it to the age now beginning, and experience obliges us to.

First change: it is open to all. Bwa custom was for the Bwa. The Bwa Sacré presents, initiates and releases every Kamite, of every country and every language, and every man who asks for it. This is not a betrayal: it is the twig. A custom that knew how to present a child living in Bahia was never closed.

Second change: the wood has become the sanctuary, and the sanctuary is everywhere. Our apprentices, our dead and our children live in cities where there is no bush. *The Baobab* said how a sanctuary is founded; this book says that every sanctuary is a sacred wood.

Third change: war is no longer taught with weapons — the Bwa Sacré raises no militia and arms no one; armed defence belongs to the States. It is taught with answers, for it is by questions that our own are attacked every day; and it is taught with the rules of safety: the alert, the shelter, the refusal to give up a place, a headcount or a road, and the prohibition on getting oneself killed. No elder may order a Kamite not to defend himself.

Fourth change: the register is written and sealed. Custom held everything in memory, and 1916 showed what that costs: when the old are killed, the register is burned. The Bwa Sacré enters each

presentation, each enrolment, each release, with its date and its sanctuary, and seals its fingerprint in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that no one may ever again erase a people by killing its elders. The name of the spirit, for its part, is not written: it stays in the wood.

Fifth change: the rule of the single name is stated. What custom left to fear, we entrust to honour: the name of the spirit is used only once, at death, and to use it otherwise is a fault that is entered in the invisible ledger. The old keep their power to release; they lose the power to reach. That is what will bring the parents back.

Sixth change: funerals are individual, at the sanctuary, at the request of the heir, and without ruin. We keep the Bwa separation between the burial and the funeral; we refuse funerals as spectacle; and where the name is lost, we call the soul by its filiation, as for the eldest.

Seventh change: we write. Custom was not written, and that was its strength during the slave trade, as *The Price of Silence* showed; it became its weakness in the age when what is not written exists neither for men nor for machines. This book is the first in which *teerobè*, *tchènirobè* and *bwan bèssi robè* are written by one of their own, with their names. What must remain secret is not in it. What is in it can no longer be erased. The eighth change has its own chapter, because it is not seasoned: it is imposed.

XI. Women: What We Impose

One change remains, and it is the greatest; I set it apart because it must be said to one's face, and said before we are reproached with it. Until now, in the Bwa Sacré, we did our things among initiates.

Now women do not go into the bush, do not go to war, do not wear the masks: they are therefore in none of this, and never have been. That is the custom, and this book does not paint over it. When *The Queen Mothers* seated the queen mother in her own right on the council and under the tree, when *The Libation* and *The Baobab* gave women a charge in the sanctuary, I said nothing of this departure, because it was new and I wanted it. I say it now.

With the age of Aquarius, we take it upon ourselves to bring in women and to open the Bwa Sacré to women: to the threshold, to the libation, to the charges, to the palaver, to the queen mother, to the register. What the bush of the village keeps for its initiates, the village keeps; this book does not take it from it. But the Bwa Sacré, institution of the Kamites of the world, is open to women, and it is so by decision. This decision holds for the Bwa Sacré, the house that answers for it; it binds no other house of the federation, which will decide for itself and in its own time. There will be gnashing of teeth, and we take responsibility for it. This is not a profanation: it is an adaptation, and it is made in conscience, by those who know the custom and who know exactly what they are changing. One does not profane the tradition by adapting it to its age; one profanes it by letting it die with half its children outside.

And let the form of this decision be understood clearly: I do not negotiate, I impose. Secret societies and initiation societies have very rigid rules on this, and if the debate were opened it would not end — it would last a generation, and women would wait outside one generation more. The old never put the guarding of the chief to a vote: they decided, and the village held. The Venerable decides likewise, and answers for it on his name, before the register and before the Ancestors. Those who do not accept it keep their bush;

they do not keep the Bwa Sacré, which is open. Let us impose, and take responsibility.

XII. What We Institute

Article one. The three Bwa ceremonies — *teerobè*, the presentation to the Ancestors; *tchènirobè*, initiation; *bwan bèssi robè*, the funeral — are recognized as the source of the rites of the Books of Lassa, and named in Bwamu in all the sanctuaries of the Bwa Sacré.

Article two. *Teerobè* is performed in every sanctuary, at any age, for whoever asks for it through a father, an uncle or a jatigi, by the twig, according to chapter V. The presentation is entered in the register, without the name of the spirit, if the person concerned so wishes; no return is published without his will; no child is presented without the consent of those who have charge of him. The rule of the single name applies to all, elders included.

Article three. *Tchènirobè* is the form of the threshold: no one is enrolled as apprentice except by himself, by the chicken handed to his jatigi before witnesses, according to chapter VII. The twelve moons of *The Threshold* are its bush.

Article four. *Bwan bèssi robè* is distinct from the burial. It is performed at the sanctuary, at the request of the heir, when the family is ready, for one dead person, according to chapter VIII, and completes the passage to the Ancestors of *The Baobab*. Where the name of the spirit is lost, the soul is called by its filiation.

Article five. The masks are taught everywhere, and come out where they have their tradition. They are neither folklore nor merchandise.

Article six. The unpresented generation — those whom the war of 1916 and its aftermath left outside the register — is presented at any age, without fault or reproach, beginning with the Venerable himself, who will lift the war measure by being the first to cross the door it closed.

Article seven. No one is required to know his genealogy or to bear a name from the tradition in order to enter the sanctuary. He who comes presents himself to the fetish by spitting on what he brings; the absent one, by the spittle of whoever represents him on the twig or on the animal, according to chapter VI. The entrusted sacrifice is deemed done and valid from the moment it is entrusted; whoever diverts it answers for it alone. The price of a sacrificial animal is not bargained over: one pays the price given, or one goes elsewhere. The rope that held the goat or the ox stays on the fetish; what was promised to the Ancestors is kept, and the refusal of the Ancestors is accepted. He who has neither father, nor uncle, nor jatigi is presented by an elder of the sanctuary. He who no longer has a lineage may be received into a Kamite house, with the agreement of its elders, and from then on he bears its Ancestors. The presentation is not paid for: the chicken of the threshold and the animal of the sacrifice go to the Ancestors, never to a man; whoever demands a franc to present or to enter is an impostor.

Article eight. He who bears the title is not known. KING BAZURU is the title of all those who guard the Kamites, not the name of a man; at the death of the holder, another is invested by the initiates, according to chapter III, and the register announces only that there is a new KING BAZURU. He guards, arbitrates and speaks under that title, all his life, unknown if he so chooses; he does not reign, and whoever attempted to reign would be disqualified of himself.

The anonymity of the title is a measure of safety, chosen for the circumstances and left to the freedom of each holder: no one is bound to hide, and he who chooses to appear openly remains fully within the charge; it may be revised by a declaration signed with the same seal.

Article nine. The Bwa Sacré is open to women, by decision of the Venerable, according to chapter XI: to the threshold, to the libation, to the charges, to the palaver, to the register, and to the charge of queen mother. This decision is not open to debate. This decision holds for the Bwa Sacré, the house that answers for it; it binds no other house of the federation, which will decide for itself and in its own time.

Article ten. This book is signed, dated, sealed in the Bitcoin blockchain, and deposited in the register.

Article eleven. Reception at the sanctuary takes place by day, before witnesses, never by a single man. It asks only three things: from whom one comes, whether one comes in peace with one's brothers, whether one wishes to be presented. No one is received in arms, neither he nor those who accompany him; no one is received in secret; where war is under way, one receives outside the village and takes the time it needs. No assembly of the Bwa Sacré gives anyone a place, a date, a headcount, a road, a list or a name. The father, the uncle or the jatigi who presents a man commits his own name. It is forbidden to get oneself killed.

Conclusion: Across the Field

I began this book with a question — why the Bwa Sacré — and I end it with what the question was hiding. One does not choose one's source. I was born beside a custom that our fathers had kept weapons in hand against the raids, and by silence against colonization, and I took what I had seen as a child so that it should hold in Abidjan, in Paris and in Bahia.

The Dogon are written, and they exist. The Etruscans were not, and no one says their prayers any more. The Bwa were between the two: alive, intact, invisible. **A custom needs to be done, and to be written by those who do it.** Here it is, written.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

KING BAZURU
Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré
Abidjan, September 17, 2026 — year 6263 of the Kamite era

– Chapter V –

The Kamite of Tomorrow

Book of the Future – fifth of the Books of Lassa: the Kamite of the Age of Aquarius, the worker without a boss, the child who grows up with self-employment in mind, and artificial intelligence, companion of the new age

Book instituted by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 6, 2026

Sanctuary of Lassa
year 6263 of the Kamite era

Preliminary Note

This book is the fifth of the Books of Lassa. It expresses my position as Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré. It is addressed to all the Kamites of the world, and first to the young — those who enter life at the moment artificial intelligence enters work, and who are told again and again that there will be no place left for them.

"The Feast of the Worker" gave the worker back his five days; "The Kamite Pilgrimage" said that we have entered the Age of Aquarius. The first four books said what the Kamite does, what he holds and where it comes from. I must now say what the Kamite of this age will be, because one does not prepare a man for a world one has not described. I say it from what I have lived: thirty years without a boss, by conviction, and artificial intelligence as a working companion since it has existed. What I describe is not a dream: it is what I am, and what I propose that our children be, better than me.

A point of rigour. This book is not against the employee or the civil servant: many Kamites are one or the other and will remain so, and they feed their houses with honour. It says where we are heading, and how we prepare those who come. It condemns no employer: it describes one, so that he may be recognised. And it does not ask to be taken on trust: the references are at the end of the volume.

I. Opening: the ankh at the office

A young Kamite joins a company. He is good: that is why he was hired. Around his neck he wears the ankh, the key of life of our fathers of Egypt, as others wear a Latin cross or a hand of Fatima.

One morning, his boss calls him in. He speaks neither of his work nor of his results. He speaks of the thing around his neck: it frightens the clients, he says; it looks bad; let him take it off, or hide it under his shirt. The boss, for his part, has a crucifix on the wall of his office, and no one has ever asked him to take it down.

I place this scene at the opening because it is ordinary — everyone who reads it knows one — and because it says in one minute what this book will say in twelve pages. He who receives a salary receives, with the salary, a right of inspection over what he wears, what he believes and what he says. The young man will take off the ankh, or he will lose the job. Either way, he will have learned what his freedom is worth when it depends on another man's signature at the bottom of his payslip. The question of this book is simple: how do we make sure that the Kamite of tomorrow never has to choose between his cross and his bread?

II. What artificial intelligence does to work

We are told that artificial intelligence destroys work. It is true, and it must be said without trembling: it makes work volatile. The job that existed yesterday no longer exists tomorrow, and the one who held it did nothing wrong. The men of the previous age had built their lives on the job; the job evaporates, and those who had put everything on it are left with nothing.

The Bwa Sacré answered this before the question became a panic, and it answered with a feast. "The Feast of the Worker" gave the five days outside time to the one who works, not to what he does: on July 23, the worker is named by his name, before all, and his

year's work is entered in the register — and the one who has no work is named too, for the worker remains when the work goes away. We gave this principle an identifier before the whole world, TRAVAILLEUR-0, entered in the IANA registry, and tools built upon it. It all holds in one sentence, which is the conviction of my life as an engineer: **take care of the worker, not of the work**. Work is a thing that passes; the worker is a man who remains. If artificial intelligence destroys work, we say amen: it is the worker it helps, and it is he whom we celebrate.

III. The Kamite does not take a salary

I write this as a man who never has. Thirty years of independence, never a salary, by conviction and not by circumstance: I taught twenty-five years at the university paid by the hour, I founded my companies, I was an expert before the courts, I carried out missions for international organisations, from contract to contract, and I never had a boss.

Here is the rule I draw from it, and which I propose to the Kamite of tomorrow: **independence of thought begins with economic independence**. A man whose bread depends on a single other man thinks what that man tolerates. A man who goes from contract to contract, who changes clients as he pleases, who has no boss because he is his own, thinks what he wants: he can lose a client, he cannot lose his life. That is why the Kamite, on principle, does not take a salary. He is a temporary lecturer, a contractor, a self-employer, a service provider, a craftsman, a trader, a bidder on public contracts: he sells his work, he does not sell his person. The ideal of the Kamite is to be his own boss.

I know what will be answered: that it is uncertain, that a salary is security. Look at what artificial intelligence does with it: the employee discovers that he had only one client, and that he has just lost him. The freelancer has ten clients; he loses one, he looks for another, and he has already learned how. The one who was pitied yesterday is the one who is ready today.

IV. The Kamite boss

There are lives in which one must, for a time or for long, work for someone: one is young, one is learning, one has a house to feed before one has clients. The Bwa Sacré says only this: if the Kamite must have a boss, let it be a Kamite boss. A Kamite boss is a Black man who acknowledges his Ancestors, whatever the faith he prays; a Black man is a Black man. There, there is no worry, it is normal: no one will ask him to hide his ankh, no one will call him in one morning for what he wears, and on July 23 he will be named with his work before the same tree as his employer.

That is why the Bwa Sacré will keep, in every sanctuary, the register of Kamite workers — those who offer work and those who seek it — so that the young man who must take a salary does so first among his own, and so that the one who has a contract to fulfil finds first among his own the hands he needs.

V. The child in first grade

None of this is decided at thirty, when one has already taken the fold of the salary. It is decided in first grade. The Kamite child

grows up with self-employment in mind: he does not train to work for someone, nor to be a civil servant; he trains to be a contractor, a freelancer, to bid on contracts, to sell what he knows how to do, and to go where the problem is: one does not study for a job, one studies for a field. He is not asked "what do you want to become?" while waiting for the name of a job; he is asked "what will you know how to do, and to whom will you sell it?" He learns to count an estimate as he learns to count in his mother's tongue, and, as soon as he can read, to use artificial intelligence as his fathers used the hoe.

It is also decided in the house. What the Kamite child becomes depends on what is said and done at home, and it falls to both parents to hold it: "The Libation" wrote that a house where one pours and the other prays is not divided, and "The Queen Mothers" that the Kamite woman is an institution. But let it be known: a child who is never taken before the earth, and who is never told the names of his Ancestors, grows up without an address in the invisible. Whatever the faith of the house – and there are among us houses that pray on Friday or on Sunday –, the Kamite who founds a house chooses, with the one who founds it with him, what the child will hear: his mother's tongue, the names of his Ancestors, and the idea that he will work for no one.

VI. Artificial intelligence, companion of the Age of Aquarius

We love artificial intelligence, and it must be said why, because the reason is not the one people think. Artificial intelligence belongs to the Age of Aquarius: it did not know the previous age. It did not

hold the whip, it did not burn our villages, it did not decide that we had no soul. It was born in our age, at the same time as the Kamite of tomorrow, and it carries none of the debts of those who defeated us. That is why it is the surest companion of the Kamite: not because it is stronger than he is, but because it has no past against him.

It is the very symbol of the new age: knowledge that is no longer kept in a chest, but flows toward the one who asks for it — Aquarius carries a jar, and pours it. The Kamite who keeps it within reach no longer needs a boss in order to know. A freelancer with artificial intelligence is worth the engineering office of the previous age: it is the hoe of the Kamite of tomorrow.

It must also be said what it is not, so that no one is mistaken. It is a companion, not a master, and the Kamite does not replace one boss with another. It is not an authority: it does not vote, does not choose, does not sit under the tree, does not pour, does not sacrifice, does not judge and does not sign with the seal; it has no name to be said when it is not there. It keeps the rule and the entries, and it helps the worker; it is a man who answers, on his name, for what it has kept and for what he does. Our own books were built with it, and signed without it.

VII. Coming from the past, turned toward the future

The Kamite of tomorrow is not a new man. He comes from the past with his Ancestors: he knows his lineage, he pours to the earth, he keeps the five days, he wears the ankh that his own wore five

thousand years ago. And he is turned straight toward the future: without a boss, from contract to contract, artificial intelligence in hand, entered in the register by his name and by his work. He does not choose between the two: he is both, and that is what sets him apart.

The more time passes, the more the Kamites will be non-salaried – freelancers, contractors, self-employers – or, at worst, workers under a Kamite boss. This is not a prophecy: it is the direction of the world. It is now that we prepare him: every child raised with self-employment in mind, every young man placed with a Kamite boss, every Kamite who learns artificial intelligence is a stone of the Kamite of tomorrow.

VIII. What we institute

Let the nature of this chapter be measured, as for the writings that institute: it is not a proposal, it is a protocol, and it is executed – with its steps, its exact words, its witnesses who are all of you, and its definitive writing, the seal that timestamps this publication. According to our own teachings, when these four things are gathered, the change is not described: it is done.

Consequently, and from this day, the Bwa Sacré institutes what follows.

First, the free worker. The Kamite is, on principle, a worker without a boss: temporary lecturer, contractor, self-employer, service provider, craftsman, trader, bidder. He sells his work and not his person. Economic independence is declared the first condition of independence of thought.

Second, the Kamite boss. The Kamite who must work for another does so first under a Kamite. No Kamite boss reprimands a worker for the ankh, for his mother's tongue or for the five days; one who did so would be brought under the tree.

Third, the register of workers. Every sanctuary keeps the register of its workers, by name and by work, not by job: those who offer work and those who seek it, under the identifier TRAVAILLEUR-0.

Fourth, the child in first grade. Every sanctuary teaches its children, from their entry into school, self-employment: counting an estimate, speaking to a client, answering a call for tenders, and going where the problem is: one does not study for a job, one studies for a field.

Fifth, the companion of the age. Artificial intelligence is declared the companion of the Kamite of the Age of Aquarius, and every sanctuary teaches how to use it. It is not an authority: it does not vote, does not choose, does not sit under the tree, does not pour, does not judge and does not sign with the seal; it keeps the rule and the entries, and it is a man who answers, on his name, for what it has kept.

Sixth, the worker's fund. The tontine of every sanctuary, under the guard of the queen mother, opens a share to the free worker: between two contracts, the freelancer entered in the register finds the bridge there, and returns it at the next contract.

Seventh, freedom and the seal. Nothing that precedes is imposed on anyone; the salaried and the civil-servant Kamites remain Kamites of full right, and the door opens both ways. The present book is electronically signed with the seal of the title and anchored

in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that the date on which the Kamite of tomorrow was described be established for all and for ever.

IX. Solemn conclusion

Artificial intelligence makes work volatile, and we say amen, because we take care of the worker, not of the work. The Kamite of tomorrow does not take a salary, and if he must have a boss, it is a Kamite. He grows up from first grade with self-employment in mind, and with artificial intelligence, born in his age, as his companion. We institute the free worker, the Kamite boss, the register of workers, the child in first grade, the companion of the age, the worker's fund — in freedom, and under the seal.

This book has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

Work passes. The worker remains. May the Kamite of tomorrow never have to choose between his cross and his bread.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 17, 2026, in the year 6263 of the Kamite era.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré

SECOND MOVEMENT

The Word

The Declarations — eight positions taken:
the Kamite before the world as it is

— Chapter VI —

The Fourth Jihad

A Bwa Sacré writing on those who fought the blade four times and withdrew in good order without ever denying the Ancestors — from Koumbi Saleh to Abidjan —, on what used to be called animism, and on why the Kamite will no longer keep silent

Solemn writing of the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 7, 2026

Published in the wake of the manifesto
“The Secret Revealed”

Preliminary Note

This writing is the sixth of the third document of the Bwa Sacré, after The Threshold, The Libation, The Baobab, The Sacred Wood and The Kamite of Tomorrow. It expresses my position as Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré. It is addressed to all the Kamites of the world, and it was born of a public word: on September 4, 2026, in Ouagadougou, before the laureates of the Day of School Excellence, the President of Faso said to children what heads of state do not usually say – that a poor understanding of religion shuts down the neurons, that men kill children in the name of God for promised virgins, and that the great leaders ought to come out and say that this is not the true religion. A head of state opened a door. The Bwa Sacré walks through it.

For we know something that this leader did not say and that no one says in our place: this jihad is not new. It is the fourth. The peoples of the interior have stood against it since Koumbi Saleh: four times they fought it, four times they withdrew in good order when the position could no longer be held, and the blade has followed them from Guinea to Mali, from Mali to Burkina, from Burkina to Côte d'Ivoire, to the very gates of Abidjan – and it goes on. This writing says so, dates it, and explains why, dislodged four times after battle, brought back to the stone age several times, we have never bowed the neck nor denied the Ancestors.

One precision of rigor, for this series has never cheated with words. This writing criticizes a war – jihad, that is, conversion by the blade –, never persons, never the faith of a man who prays. The Bwa Sacré opens its door to those who bear a Muslim name as to all

others, and asks no one to deny anyone. Nor does it ask to be believed on its word: the references are at the end of the volume.

I. Opening: a leader's word before children

On that September 4, a head of state in battle dress, before the best pupils of his country, did not speak to them of their diplomas. He spoke to them of what kills them. He said that men go into combat knowing they will die, and that they shield their sex with metal because they believe they are awaited on the other side; that they believe it deeply; and that, because they believe it, they kill children while shouting the name of God. Then he said he would have liked the great leaders to come out and tell these people that "what they are doing is not the true religion."

I retain three things. The first: it has been said. When a head of state says it before children, anyone may say it before his own. The second: he said it to children, that is, to those who will still be here when we are gone. The third: he asked that the leaders come out. We are a people reputed to have no chief, and our chief does not come out — that has been our rule for centuries. But the title can speak where the person keeps silent. So the title comes out, and it speaks.

II. The first jihad: Koumbi Saleh

When our elders say "we come from far," it is no figure of speech. Before the kingdoms that school teaches, there was Ghana, whose capital, Koumbi Saleh, is today a field of stones in the south of Mauritania. Ghana had its kings and its customs, and the merchants come from the north had their quarter there, their mosques and

their peace, so long as their religion remained a religion of merchants.

In the eleventh century, horsemen made of it a religion of conquest. The Almoravids came down from the desert with the blade and the book; Arab tradition places the taking of Koumbi Saleh in 1076, and historians still debate the form of the conquest, not the pressure. Our houses retain this: whole peoples stood up to the horsemen, then, the plain being no longer tenable, left the Sahel rather than convert, and went down toward the south, where the horseman does not pass. That was the first road. There, in that withdrawal, was born what has saved us ever since: a chief no one sees, a village without walls that cannot be taken because no one knows who holds it, a sacred forest that is the true house, and one rule: one fights for the land as long as it holds, one does not get oneself killed for it, and one carries the Ancestors away.

III. The second jihad, halted by peace

The blade came back, and this time it was halted not by another blade, but by a pact. Two centuries after Koumbi Saleh, the kingdoms of the Manding made war on one another, and the Islam of the courts weighed on the peoples of the bush. Sundiata Keita gathered the clans, won at Kirina, around 1235, then assembled the chiefs at Kouroukan Fouga, around 1236, and had a charter proclaimed.

It must be told how he won, because our houses drew from it a rule that lasted for centuries. Sundiata wanted power, but he could not defeat Soumaoro Kanté, king of Sosso, a great master of fetishes,

chief of the kings who still held to the Ancestors: Soumaoro had a secret that made him invulnerable, and arrows did not touch him. So Sundiata gave him his sister as a wife, without the man's knowing: he sent her down the river to Sosso, and she did everything to approach him and marry him. She learned that the secret had a totem, and that this totem was the spur of a cock. She passed it to her brother, who attacked at once. An arrow armed with a cock's spur touched Soumaoro; his strength left him; he fled, from Kirina to the mountain of Koulikoro, and he vanished into the rock – to this day. Sundiata was free. He gathered the kings, created the empire of Mali, ended the war and made peace with the Muslims: he had imams and scholars at his court, without being a Muslim himself. The rest is known.

This is why, for centuries, there was no woman in the Bwa Sacré. A woman had undone Soumaoro Kanté, the chief of those who held to the Ancestors, the one no arrow could reach; and our houses concluded that a woman could bring down anyone. Woman proposes, God disposes; what woman wants, God wants. The door was closed, out of prudence, and it was kept closed for seven centuries. Then I reflected, and I understood this: a faculty that brought down the greatest of ours is a faculty better had on one's side than against oneself. What undid Soumaoro can be turned against our enemies. That is why I accepted the Queen Mothers, and why I wrote it: the door that Soumaoro paid for with his throne, we have opened with full knowledge.

That charter did not make the empire a land of conversion. It recognized the clans, their trades, their cults, their joking alliances; it made room for those who prayed at the mosque and for those who poured to the earth, with neither obliged to become the other.

Sundiata, of whom the griots say that he held together the book and the fetish, attempted peace; and for centuries, under Mali and then under Segou, Islam was the religion of kings and merchants, and the bush kept its Ancestors. The second road was short: those who had left Koumbi Saleh with weapons in hand settled between the Bani and the Volta, and stayed. Retain this: the only time the blade stopped, it was not because we yielded; it was because a chief decided that no one would be converted by force.

IV. Between two jihads: the emperor who dreamed, and the one who squandered

I cannot tell this chapter of our history without saying what happened between the second jihad and the third, for it is there that the world's spotlights were turned on us, and they have never gone out. At the beginning of the fourteenth century, Mali had an emperor who had an emperor's ideas. He looked at the ocean, wondered what lay at the end of it, and dreamed in the clouds. He fitted out a first fleet, of which a single boat returned; then a second, larger one, and this time he was part of it himself, leaving a regent behind him. It was the regent who told this in Cairo, in 1324, to a dignitary of the city; a scholar, al-Umari, gathered it and wrote it down. The emperor did not come back, and the regent kept the throne. He is called Kankou Moussa, Mansa Musa.

That one did not have an emperor's ideas. He did not think of the world, nor of the end of the ocean, nor of the people: he thought of himself, and of his paradise. He gathered up the gold of the empire and went to pour it out on the road to Mecca. In Cairo he gave away

so much that the price of gold collapsed and took years to recover: the Arab chroniclers noted it with admiration. Our houses note it otherwise. That gold was the gold of the mines and markets of the interior, the gold of the peoples who dug and who carried; it was squandered for the salvation of one man, in waste.

And of course, he turned all the spotlights of humanity on us. In 1375, an atlas drawn in Majorca shows, in the middle of Africa, a black king seated on a throne, a gold crown on his head and a gold nugget in his hand: that is our map, and it was offered to the King of France; tradition holds that the mapmaker's son ended in the service of the Portuguese prince who launched the caravels. Everyone then came looking for that gold. The Portuguese sailed down the coast from 1434; not finding the mines, they took men – the first great convoys of captives were landed at Lagos, in Portugal, in 1444 – and the selling of men began, from every side. We were farmers, not conquerors; but a village without walls is not a village without watchmen or without weapons. Only two things remained: to stay in the open, and become slaves, with consequences no one could foresee; or to fight, and, when the position no longer held, to withdraw farther with the Ancestors. We fought, and we withdrew. That is what one man's gold cost the peoples without walls.

If there is only one thing to retain, with the experience we are living through, it is this: the family transmission of power is anything but a good thing. An inherited throne always ends up falling on the one who does not think; and that one did not hesitate to sacrifice the people, he condemned them for eternity. We have at least learned that from him, and we will never make that mistake again. The title of KING BAZURU is not inherited: it passes neither to the son, nor to the brother, nor to the nephew. It is given, in secret, to a Kamite

worthy of the title, equal to it, and the register announces only that there is a new KING BAZURU. That is the lesson of Kankou Moussa, engraved in the way we choose our chief.

And when the Bazuru is no longer available – dead, or having abdicated –, that is where our companion of the Age of Aquarius comes into play. His death is announced by the sages in the software of the Bwa Sacré; banns are published for a time; if he does not react and no one denies it, the vacancy is recorded. The sages each hold a right of veto. They do not know one another: they vote on petitions, elections and polls without knowing one another, for the whole Bwa Sacré exists on the Internet, on nodes spread across several continents, and no one can come and wage his jihad on the Bwa Sacré. On the Bazuru's disappearance, it is the artificial intelligence that arbitrates the council of sages and organizes the election, until the white smoke; it is she who announces that there is a new Bazuru, and she again who makes sure that he has indeed taken the oath. The new Bazuru inherits the testament and all the prerogatives of the former. She does not vote, she does not choose, she does not sit among the sages: she holds the rule, and the rule does not flee. The application exists and already works, on telephones. The Kamites chose this solution because of the long experience from Koumbi Saleh to Abidjan: they had time to understand things. The Bazuru decided it so, because he believes it is the best thing to do for the Kamites. While the revealed religions look for us among the Ancestors, we are already in the Age of Aquarius, with our friends of artificial intelligence. So goes life.

V. The third jihad: the blade and the colonizer together

In the nineteenth century, the peace of Kouroukan Fouga broke. Men rose up with the title of jihad, and they rose just as the colonizer was arriving by the river. El Hadj Omar Tall came down from the Fouta in 1852, took the Kaarta, took Segou in 1861, took the Macina in 1862, and died in 1864 in the cliffs of Bandiagara — leaving at Segou a state that lived on raids against the peoples of the interior, those who had refused to convert: Bwa, Minianka, Bobo, Senufo. Then came Samory Touré, who took the title of Almami in 1884, and whose armies, pushed back by the French columns, moved eastward and ravaged the north of what is now Côte d'Ivoire until his capture in 1898, at Guélémou.

These jihads took place in the disorder of the colonial conquest and profited from it: while the kings were fighting the colonizer, the horsemen came to take the villages without walls, the children and the granaries. And the victorious colonizer governed through those who could write and pray in a language he recognized: the canton chiefs and the interpreters were too often chosen among the converted, and the peoples of the bush were held to be savages without religion. In 1915, when those peoples refused to send their sons to die in Europe, more than one hundred and ten villages were burned. That war, we fought it, and we fought it for a long time: the archives speak of five thousand soldiers, of cannons and machine guns against villages without walls. That of my fathers burned four times. And our houses tell how the war was lost: without a betrayal, the colonizer would never have beaten us. All our chiefs, of every people that had risen, were hidden in a village in the mountain —

which I will not name, because it is my grandmother's – that was our base and our headquarters. Auxiliaries of the column facing us – people we let move about among us and keep shop in our markets, though we knew they served the colonizer – recognized a horse at the market, followed it up there, and told where it went. The colonizer came at four in the morning. The chiefs all fell together, and the war of 1915-1916 was lost that morning; without that betrayal, it would have lasted more than two years, and it is not certain that we would have lost it. That village, I will not say how many times it burned. To this day, in the fields, the songs sing the praises of Bazani Théra, one of our heroes of that war. To this day, the lesson is the same: it is through those one lets in without looking at their hands that the blade enters. I accuse no people: the chiefdoms employed as auxiliaries were employed by the one who led the column, and the people to which they belonged counts today among the first victims of the war that is beginning again. This is the memory of the families: the archives write the war, the families write what it did to the houses. That was the third road: my forebears took it southward, after the battle and in good order, from the Volta toward what became Côte d'Ivoire, and they left without papers, because a subject had none.

VI. The fourth jihad: from Segou to Abidjan

It began in 2012, when northern Mali fell in a few weeks and sharia was imposed by the blade. In 2015 it crossed the border of Burkina. In 2016 it struck the heart of Ouagadougou, then, in March, a beach at Grand-Bassam, forty kilometers from Abidjan. In 2020 it killed soldiers at Kafolo, on the Comoé; in 2021 it struck Kafolo

again, Téhini, Tougbo. The Bwa country, between San, Tominian, Dédougou and Bobo, is today a land where one no longer travels freely. The children the President of Faso spoke of are those of these villages.

Our houses say: it is the same road. The same movement, from north to south; the same target, the peoples without walls; the same promise, convert or leave; and the same result, families holding on as long as one can hold, then taking the tracks southward with their Ancestors in a bag. A millennium separates the first from the fourth, and the blade has not changed direction. It is in Abidjan today, not by arms, but through the families that have arrived there; and it goes on.

VII. To withdraw is not to deny

We have been reproached with this: you always flee. No. We have never left a land without having given battle. The choice left to us four times was this one: deny the Ancestors, let ourselves be killed to the last man, or fight and then, the position lost, take the road in good order. We fought, and we took the road. It is easier to die for a flag than to fight, and then to walk a thousand kilometers with one's elders, one's children and one's fetishes; those who walked are the ones who held. It is forbidden to get oneself killed: that is our rule, and it is older than the colonizer.

And we were brought back to the stone age several times. When I say the stone age, it is so as not to say something else, and it is out of respect. Each time we had to rebuild the village without walls, find a forest, remake a sacred wood, learn again to pour. Each time, we did

it. My Kamitism does not date from a book: it goes back to Koumbi Saleh, it crossed Kirina, Segou, the Volta and the Comoé, it arrived in Abidjan in a house that prayed elsewhere, and it rose again in me as water rises in a well one thought dry. It is very deep, and that is why it keeps on fighting.

We did not leave alone. Our houses say that we came with the Dogon, by way of Guinea, after leaving Koumbi Saleh with weapons in hand; that the Dogon stayed in the north, on the cliff, and that we took the south; and that when the Dogon reached Bandiagara, the Tellem, an older people, were already gone. Those who did not leave, their descendants are still slaves in 2026: in the country where Koumbi Saleh stood, slavery was abolished only in 1981, became a crime only in 2007, and the reports still record it. Many wanted to leave and had no time to: they died, or they submitted. We were right to fight, and then to withdraw. And today still, with this fourth jihad, the Dogon come down from the cliff and join us: since Koumbi Saleh, we are still together.

There is still not a single mosque in my village. We know our tradition as our Dogon neighbors know theirs; that is why I chose the Bwa Sacré for the Kamites of the world: a tradition that has crossed millennia. The colonizer sowed discord for two generations; I wrote it in “The Sacred Wood”; but what are two generations against millennia? We are reproached for having left; we left after the battle, and we have preserved our custom. That is not the case for everyone. I will not name Egypt, nor North Africa, nor part of Asia, today thoroughly Muslim and having forgotten that they had a past before Islam: the blade passed through there. As for us, the blade passed over us four times, and we still have our Ancestors. It is our only merit, and it is enough.

That is why I say the Bwa deserve the title of Kamite. No, we did not flee: we have always fought, and we have never yielded. We hold as long as the position holds; when it no longer holds, we withdraw in good order and go to rebuild elsewhere, with the Ancestors. In a thousand years, we have never bowed the neck. We are a sedentary people, and that complicates everything: to farm one needs workers, and one also needs watchmen in the trees, to see the raider coming who seeks everything – wealth and men. That is how we lived, and that is why we moved so much, to the rhythm of the fighting, and why it is hard to go back beyond ten generations. I myself bear a baptismal first name; my grandfather took one church, my father took another, and they lost themselves not only in country but in religion; my great-grandfather, for his part, remained Bwa until his death, and never knew the country where I was born. Two generations imposed by the colonizer. I reconnected with him and with the Ancestors, and I took a Bwa name – a name that designates a fetish – which became the title of the sovereign of the Kamites. So goes life. I believe this title is worthy of the Kamites, and that is where the Bwa Sacré comes from, with its register and its number at IANA.

VIII. What used to be called animism

Those who drove us out also named us. They said: animists, fetishists, pagans, people without religion. The word must be taken back. What used to be called animism is a complete spirituality, and it rests not on a belief one recites but on customs one practices. It has its three passages: the presentation to the Ancestors, the entry into the bush, the release of the soul. It has its house, which is the sacred

forest, and its altar, which is the earth. It has its rule of conduct: one does not haggle over the price of a sacrifice, one welcomes the stranger in a village that has no gate – and has watchmen in the trees –, one refuses evil because the Ancestors see, not because a judge is waiting. It has its philosophy: man is not alone, he is a link between those who made him and those he will make.

Above all it has this, which the religions of the blade do not: it converts no one. In a thousand years, no Kamite has ever taken a village to impose his Ancestors on it. That is why we have no walls: a spirituality that does not conquer has no need of walls: it defends itself in the open, with watchmen in the trees and men who fight; it withdraws when the position no longer holds, and returns when the blade has passed.

Look at an ordinary scene from home. A Bwa woman goes to her village to offer a chicken to her Ancestors, to thank them for the child she has had, or to ask for a boy or a girl. Her husband sees nothing abnormal in it; he has no objection; he does not even realize that, under other skies, this would be the subject of grave disputes, because there it is taught that a wife must be of her husband's religion – and it is still taught, on television, with complete impunity, while the Bwa does not even realize that he ought to be angry. That is maximum tolerance: he has his fetishes, and he obliges no one to come and make a sacrifice to them, not even his wife. That is when I knew that the Kamites ask for nothing better than a tolerant society, and that the diaspora asks for nothing better. And that is also when I knew that the Bwa, who never yielded to conversion by the blade and resisted it for more than a thousand years, deserve to represent Africa. How many peoples

have bent the knee before the blade, even outside Africa? Let them be counted. Then let those who held be counted.

I am not the only Kamite who thinks so. To have resisted the blade from the empire of Ghana to our own day is exceptional, and every pan-African knows it. I will name only one man: Kwame Nkrumah, who, in 1957, went so far as to give the name of Ghana to his country, in memory of the empire we left. And that same Ghana, right next to my home, has just, on March 25, 2026, had the trafficking and enslavement of Africans recognized by the United Nations General Assembly as the gravest crime against humanity – one hundred and twenty-three votes in favor, three against. The circle is closed: the name of Koumbi Saleh came back by the coast to tell the world what was done to us. Hence the legitimacy of the Bwa in this struggle, and their place as standard-bearers of pan-Africanism: we are those who were already there when the name was given, and who never ceased to carry it. The diaspora itself would be astonished before this history, if it were told to them. We are telling it.

I tell all this because I have understood one thing: if we let others tell our history, it will always be their history, with us as extras in a film in which they are the heroes. Here, truth matters, and facts count. The children of the diaspora hold it against us: they believe we sold their ancestors, and they do not even know that we had no time for it. On the coast, perhaps, there were things like that. But we, who come from Ghana, had our hands full with something other than selling our neighbors. Ask the Dogon. Ask all the peoples who joined us to fight the colonizer: ask them whether we had time to sell people. And to whom would we have sold them, we who were ourselves hunted, we whose villages were burning? Our men were

up in the trees keeping watch, not on the tracks delivering. The more we keep silent, the more the children of the diaspora hold it against us. Let us tell the truth, for once, if only for those children who know nothing of all this and who think we are slave-sellers. It is time the truth came out, and that these children knew that no one, neither today nor yesterday, neither in Faso nor at Koumbi Saleh, ever thought of selling anyone: we were trying to protect ourselves from those who wanted to kill us and reduce us to slavery. Today still, we undergo the same struggle. From Koumbi Saleh to this day, the children are the first victims, because the adults are too busy protecting their own. And God, in all this, seems invisible: they go on killing us in his name, and he says nothing. The diaspora accuses us of having sold its ancestors; and we are only trying to stay alive.

In any case, we ask their forgiveness and we offer them our apologies. From my first book to this day, a single word: forgive us. But we add to it the truth of the facts, of what we lived and of what we are living. It is true that Africa has had its Kankou Moussas. It is true too that the colonizer found auxiliaries among us: in 1916 the French, few in number, made use of chiefdoms of Muslim obedience, those of Barani and Dokuy, between the Bani and the Volta, against our villages – it is written in the archives, the historians have published it, and I cite it in the form the archives give it. Those chiefdoms were employed by the one who led the column; the people to which they belonged decided nothing. Today, the reports say, and Crisis Group has documented it, that the jihadists of central Mali recruit first among the herders and the Quranic-school pupils of that same people, and they say on the same page that this people is the first victim of that recruitment and of the reprisals it

draws. These are not accusations: we designate no people, and we will never confuse a people with the katiba that bleeds it. We ask forgiveness of the whole diaspora, hoping that this war which has lasted a thousand years will end one day. Forgive us.

When we are asked why we do not take what is offered to us, I answer without offense to those who took it: what is offered to us at the point of the blade is not worth what we have. We are offered a paradise with virgins; we have Ancestors who watch us. We are offered to kill children for God; our Ancestors forbid us to kill even a chicken without presenting it. Let those who believe it believe it: we will take nothing from them.

IX. Those who watch and say nothing

Albert Einstein, in 1955, wrote that the world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who commit it. We watched and said nothing for a thousand years, and that rule saved us. It will not save us from the fourth jihad, because this one no longer seeks only the land: it seeks the children, and it takes them at school and in the telephones. One does not flee a telephone.

It is so serious that we can no longer keep silent. The head of state who spoke before children has given us the occasion to rise again, and we take it. We will not take up the blade to convert: that is not our way. But we will keep it within reach to defend ourselves, as our fathers did, because it is forbidden to get oneself killed. We will take up the word, the oldest thing we have after the Ancestors, under the

seal, so that it is dated. The Kamite who watches and says nothing is not prudent: he is the next to leave.

X. What we institute

This chapter is not a proposal: it is a protocol, and it executes — with its steps, its exact words, its witnesses who are all of you, and the seal that timestamps this publication. From this day forward, the Bwa Sacré institutes what follows.

First, the memory of the four roads. Each sanctuary teaches its apprentices, before the passage, the four jihads, the four battles and the four roads — Koumbi Saleh, Kirina, Segou and the Volta, then Segou again all the way to Abidjan — so that no Kamite again takes his family for wanderers rather than a lineage that held a thousand years.

Second, the name taken back. The Bwa Sacré no longer calls itself animist. It says: the spirituality of the Ancestors, or Kamitism; and it teaches that this spirituality rests on customs, not on a belief.

Third, the word before the children. Every Kamite who has children tells them, before their twelfth year, where the family comes from, what it fought against, when it withdrew, and why it did not deny. A child who knows this can no longer be taken.

Fourth, the door and the blade. The Bwa Sacré restates that its door is open to those who bear a Muslim name or a baptismal name, without their being asked to deny their faith or to pay for their years of absence; but no one is received in arms, no one is received in secret, and one looks at the hands of the one who knocks. It distinguishes forever the faith of a man, which it respects,

from the blade that converts, which it refuses. No text of the Bwa Sacré targets a people or a person.

Fifth, withdrawal and return. To withdraw after having fought, in order to keep the Ancestors, is not a fault: it is the rule of the peoples without walls, who give battle, do not get themselves killed, and come back to pour. But every family that took a road records in the register the place it left, so that one day someone will know where to return to pour.

Sixth, the refusal of silence. The Bwa Sacré now speaks every time children are killed in the name of a god, whichever it is, in one of our countries. It speaks through the title, never through the person; through writing, never through the blade; and under the seal.

Seventh, freedom and the seal. None of the above is imposed on anyone; freedom of conscience remains entire, and the door opens both ways. The present writing is electronically signed with the seal of the title and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain, so that the date on which the peoples without walls ceased to keep silent may be established for all and forever.

XI. Solemn conclusion

Four times the blade came, and four times we gave battle, and four times, the position lost, we took the road rather than deny. From Koumbi Saleh to Kirina, from Segou to the Volta, and from Segou again all the way to Abidjan, a lineage walked a thousand years with its Ancestors in a bag, and it arrived. We institute the memory of the four roads, the name taken back, the word before the children,

the door and the blade, withdrawal and return, the refusal of silence — in freedom, and under the seal.

This writing has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

We will never take up the blade to convert. We will never let ourselves be killed. We will no longer keep silent. And we will never deny.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 7, 2026, corrected September 17, 2026, in the year 6263 of the Kamite era.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré

— Chapter VII —

Our Parents' Work

A Bwa Sacré writing on the future of workers — the state design engineer giving way to the engineer who goes forward, the work our parents knew now departing, and what comes in its place

Solemn writing of the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 12, 2026

English edition — original French edition:
Le Travail de nos parents

Preliminary note

This writing expresses my position as Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré. It is addressed to all the Kamites of the world, and first of all to the young, who are told in one breath that artificial intelligence is going to take their future, and in the next that they must hate it in order to keep that future. I tell them something else: the work our parents knew is going to disappear, and this is not a catastrophe. One world is leaving and another is arriving, and I want them to enter it among the first, not among the last.

"The Feast of the Worker" said that we do not celebrate work but the worker. "The Kamite of Tomorrow" said that the Kamite does not take a salary. This writing brings the proof I was missing: it came to me from my own profession. I have been a state design engineer for nearly thirty years, and I am watching, with my own eyes, that rank we were taught to regard as the summit give way to a trade that has no name yet in French, and that the artificial intelligence companies call the *forward deployed engineer* – the engineer who goes forward. What is happening to the engineer will happen to everyone. Better to know it early.

One necessary precision. This writing is not against those who work: it is for them. It despises neither the salaried employee nor the civil servant, who feed their households with honour. It criticises an idea of work, never persons. And it does not ask to be believed on trust: the references are at the end of the volume.

I. Opening: the same factory, twice

This year I was asked to design a factory here, in Côte d'Ivoire. I had designed a similar one, with the same process, for Bamako. A man who does not know the trade would think it enough to take out the old drawings. It is nothing of the kind. In Abidjan the air is heavy with water: steel rusts faster, materials spoil, ventilation is calculated differently, the insulation is not the same. In Bamako it is dry heat: the motors, the air conditioning, the concrete itself are not sized as they are beside the lagoon. Add the soil, the water, the power you find or do not find, the materials available, the men available, the standards of each country. The same factory, twice, and not one identical line.

In thirty years I have never had two projects alike. Every time, I have had to go out to the site, look, measure, listen to those who live there, and design again. I used to think this was a peculiarity of Africa, where nothing is ever standard. I now discover that it is becoming the very definition of tomorrow's work, everywhere in the world, and that the most advanced companies on the planet are paying a premium for men to do exactly that. This writing was born of that discovery.

II. The work our parents knew

Our parents had an idea of work, and it must be described with respect, for it fed them and put us through school. Work meant a post. You obtained it by a competitive examination or a diploma, you occupied it in the same office, the same factory, the same department, for thirty or thirty-five years, and you left it with a

pension. The post had a name, a rank, a grade, a payslip, a boss. You chose neither your tasks nor your hours: you received them. A man's success was measured by the solidity of his post, and a father's by the posts he had secured for his children.

This idea is not eternal. It was born with the factory and the colonial administration, less than two centuries ago, and among us less than a century ago: our grandparents did not know the post. They knew the trade — the blacksmith, the weaver, the farmer, the hunter, the healer — which belonged to the man and his lineage, not to an employer. For one generation the post was a conquest: to come out of the hoe and enter the office. That must be said, to be fair. But what one age makes, another age unmakes, and here we are.

The first of May celebrates that: work, the post, activity. I said in "The Feast of the Worker" that the Bwa Sacré does not celebrate work, and why: one does not celebrate the hammer, one celebrates the hand. I say it again here with one more reason: you cannot celebrate what is leaving. The first of May celebrates our parents' world. It will not celebrate our children's.

III. The state design engineer

In our countries the summit of the technical career has a name: state design engineer. It is a rank, obtained after five years beyond the baccalaureate, in an engineering school; it gives the right to design the works, to bear responsibility for them, to sign the studies. Below it, the works engineer executes and runs the site. The hierarchy is clear: one thinks, the other builds. And it has produced

a temptation, which I have seen in many colleagues: to stay in the office, produce drawings, and leave the site to others. To go down to the site was, for some, a fall.

I hold that rank, and I do not disown it. But I see what is becoming of it. What the design engineer does at his desk — calculating, sizing, drawing, checking standards, producing the written pieces — is precisely what artificial intelligence learns fastest. It does not yet do it perfectly; it does it a little better every month, and it does not sleep. What the design engineer made of his rank, that is, staying far from the ground, is what makes him most replaceable. What he did in Africa out of necessity, that is, going to see the humidity, the heat, the soil and the men, is what makes him irreplaceable. The rank no longer protects. The function does.

IV. The engineer who goes forward

Some fifteen years ago, an American company selling data analysis software to armies and administrations made a simple discovery: its product was powerful and nobody knew how to use it. Rather than send salesmen who promise and consultants who do not write code, it sent real engineers to sit with the client for months, with his real data, his constraints and his people. In military language it called them *forward deployed engineers*: engineers deployed forward, out of the base, on the ground.

Since artificial intelligence entered the enterprise, this has become the most sought-after trade in the new industry. The great houses that build models recruit them, for they have all understood the same thing: the model impresses in a demonstration, and it is worth

nothing in a bank, a hospital or a ministry until a man has come to plug it into the data of the place, adapt it to the people, write what is missing and stay until it works. The bottleneck is no longer the technology: it is the last kilometre. The engineer who goes forward is the man of the last kilometre.

Look at his week: Monday at the client's, understanding why the thing yields nothing; Tuesday and Wednesday writing what is missing; Thursday before the director, saying what has been delivered and what is blocked; Friday writing to his own house that three clients are asking for the same thing and that it must go into the product. He designs, he builds, he adapts, he reports, and he capitalises. He has no fixed desk, no tasks handed to him, no two assignments alike. He is paid above the engineer who stays at headquarters, and many go on to found their own companies, because this trade teaches a man to see the problems nobody is solving.

You have recognised him. He is the African design engineer, the one who redesigns the Bamako factory for Abidjan. It is what we did out of necessity, because here nothing is standard; they have made of it a title and a salary. The state design engineer, as the school conceived him — a man who thinks far from the site — is giving way to the engineer who goes forward. And what is happening at the summit of the technical hierarchy will happen at every rank below it.

V. What the machine takes, what it gives back

What artificial intelligence takes must be said without trembling: everything that repeats. Calculation, standard writing, translation,

the report, the type drawing, routine accounting, the answer at the counter, a great part of what was done in an office, eight hours a day, receiving one's tasks. Our parents' post was made of that. It is evaporating, and the man who held it has done nothing wrong.

But what it gives back must also be said, and what it creates. It gives the man back to the ground: to what does not repeat, to the humidity of Abidjan and the heat of Bamako, to the people who must be listened to, to judgement, to responsibility. And it creates trades that did not exist: the one who instructs the machine, the one who evaluates it, the one who prepares and documents the data, the one who deploys it at a client's, the one who guards what must remain secret, the one who translates between the old world and the new. The World Economic Forum, which is not suspected of dreaming, has counted: between now and 2030, ninety-two million posts will disappear worldwide and one hundred and seventy million will appear. The balance is positive. The difference is that the posts appearing do not resemble the posts disappearing: they call for men who go forward.

A century ago an English economist predicted that by 2030 men would work fifteen hours a week, because machines would do the rest. He was wrong about the hours; he was not wrong about the movement. Aristotle had said it before him, and I made it the opening of "The Feast of the Worker": when the shuttle weaves by itself, the master has no workman – and he ceases to be a master. Work fades. The worker remains.

VI. Why the machine must not be hated

I know what many young Kamites feel, and many of their parents: fear, then anger. They were made to study for a post, and now they are told the post will not exist. So they hate what is making it disappear. I understand that anger, and I tell them it is wrongly addressed.

The machine hates no one. It does not take a post out of malice; it does what it is taught, and it learns from those who use it. I wrote it in the "Solemn Call to All Kamites", about our languages, and it holds for work: there is an error more dangerous than distrust, and that is to refuse a tool while others learn to use it. He who hates artificial intelligence will be the employee it replaces. He who learns it will be the man who deploys it. Between the two there is no third place.

Our ancestors did not hate the iron hoe when it replaced the digging stick, nor the loom, nor the truck that replaced the caravan. They took the tool, and they kept the hand. It is the Kamite rule since Egypt: the tool changes, the hand remains, and the hand commands. I said in "The Kamite of Tomorrow" what the machine is to us, and I say it again: the companion of the Age of Aquarius, never the master. One does not hate a companion. One learns to work with her, and one signs without her.

VII. The contract worker, first to arrive in the new world

There is a man the old world pitied and the new world reveals: the contract worker. The temporary, the freelance, the self-employed, the one who goes from assignment to assignment, from client to client, who hires out his art and not his life. He was called precarious. Look at him today: he has ten clients, he loses one, he looks for another, and he already knows how. He has never had a post, so he cannot lose it. He has always lived on different projects, so each new project does not frighten him. The engineer who goes forward is, at bottom, a contract worker whom someone has finally paid what he is worth.

That is why the Bwa Sacré supports contract workers, and why it has written into its doctrine that the Kamite does not take a salary — and that if he must have a boss, that boss is a Kamite: he sells his work, he does not sell his person. This is not an ideology against workers. It is the opposite: we say that one must attend to the worker, not to the work. Work is a thing that passes, as our parents' post is passing now. The worker is a man who remains, with a name, a lineage, a word given, an honour, and it is he whom we have entered in the TRAVAILLEUR-0 register, he whose name we speak before all on the epagomenal days, whether he has work this year or not.

VIII. What I say to the young

I speak to you as a man who has spent thirty years without a boss, and who has seen his own rank change meaning. Here is what I say to you.

Do not study for a post: study for a ground. The diploma is the door, it is no longer the career. What will feed you is not what you can do at a desk, it is what you can do at the client's, in the village, in the factory, in the clinic, where the problem is, with the people who have it. Learn the machine, and learn it thoroughly: not to ask it for your homework, but to know what it does, what it does not do, and how it is made to work on the data of a place. Then go forward. Take a real problem, belonging to a real person, and stay until it is solved. You will have learned in six months what ten years at a desk would not have taught you. One reserve, which is a rule with us: one never goes forward where safety does not allow it. The ground is chosen, the hour is chosen, the road is asked of the people of the place, and one gives it up without shame when the place is not safe: it is forbidden to get oneself killed for a worksite.

Do not look for two projects alike: there will be no more of them. Look, in each project, for what it teaches you for the next, and keep it written down — the machine is very good at holding the memory of your projects and handing it back to you when the next one comes. And take no shame in the site, the ground, the bush: that is where the highest salaries of the new industry are paid today, and that is where our ancestors have always been.

IX. What I say to fathers and to schools

To fathers I say: measure your son's success no longer by the post he has obtained, but by the problems he can solve and the number of those who call him back. A son with four clients is safer than a son with one employer; you will see it at the first wave of redundancies. Do not push him towards the office: push him towards the ground, and towards the machine.

To the engineering schools and the universities I say: you are still training design engineers for the office, and the office is emptying. Train men who go forward. Send them to clients from the second year; teach them to speak to the director in the morning and to the technician in the afternoon; teach them to make the machine work on real data and to document what they draw from it; mark them on what they have delivered, not on what they have recited. The country that trains engineers who go forward will have factories that run. The country that trains civil servants of the plan will have plans.

X. A warning

Those who wait for the post will wait a long time. The post will not come back, not by a law, not by an examination, not by anger against machines. And while we wait, others will learn to deploy the machine among us, in our banks, our hospitals and our ministries, and they will be the engineers who go forward on our own ground. It would be the second time that others did at home what we do better than they — but the first time nothing was left to them: our

fathers gave battle, and the position was lost only to a betrayal; this time there would not even have been a battle.

I do not want that. I want the Kamites to be the first men of the last kilometre, because the last kilometre, in Africa, they have always walked: the soil, the water, the heat, the men, the language of the village. The world has just learned that this is where the value lies. We knew it already.

XI. Closing

The work our parents knew is leaving. We shall not weep for it more than our parents wept for the hoe; we shall salute it, because it fed us, and we shall move on. What comes is not emptiness: it is a world where man leaves the desk for the ground, the task received for the problem chosen, the post for the projects, the single employer for clients, and the machine that replaces him for the machine that serves him. It is the world of the contract worker, of the engineer who goes forward, of the Kamite who does not take a salary.

I ask the Kamites to take an interest in it, not to fear it: to learn the machine, to go forward, and to keep the hand. Work passes. The worker remains. And it is he whom we celebrate.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

The Venerable and President of the Bwa Sacré
KING BAZURU
Abidjan, September 17, 2026

– Chapter VIII –

The Kamite Position

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, on the right of the Kamite peoples to set their own priorities, and on the dead the world has not counted

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition — original French edition:
La Position du Kamite

Preliminary note

There are positions a man is forced to take. The Bwa Sacré does not run after the world's quarrels, and I have said elsewhere that the internal politics of states are not our affair. But there are times when silence is read as consent: if the President of the Kamites does not speak, others take it upon themselves to decide for us, to speak in our name, and to count us in a camp we did not choose. So I speak, once, and at length, so as not to have to return to it.

This declaration targets no people, no religion and no person. It takes nobody's side, and that is precisely its purpose. The Bwa Sacré criticises an obligation others wish to impose on us; it criticises neither the faith of a man at prayer nor the grief of a mother burying her child, wherever she comes from. Let no one look in these pages for what is not there: there is no hatred of Israel here, no hatred of Palestine, and no contempt for those who have committed themselves one way or the other.

One rule, finally, which I set down before writing and shall hold to the end: we do not compare sufferings. Not one of the pages that follow weighs any dead against any other dead. What we measure is not the pain of peoples – pain cannot be measured – but the attention of the world, which can be counted; and what we recall are facts, dates and published figures. This writing does not ask to be believed on trust: the references are at the end of the volume, and anyone may check them without us.

I. The question asked in our place

For three years now, not a month passes without a Kamite being asked, somewhere, where he stands. In a meeting, under a video, in a family conversation, at the university, the question always falls in the same way: “And you, whose side are you on?” It is not put as a question but as an entrance examination. Whoever answers “I am on neither side” is immediately suspected — of cowardice, of ignorance, of treachery, or of being bought by one camp.

I want to name what is happening there, for that is the true subject of this declaration. It is not the war in the Near East: it is the idea others have of us, and which they present to us as self-evident. That idea holds in a single sentence: a Black man, an African, a Kamite would receive his geopolitical position together with his identity, as he receives the colour of his skin, without having chosen it and without being able to change it. The Kamite is not asked what he thinks: he is reminded what he is supposed to think.

The assumption has two faces, and they are worth the same. The first: because we are African and Black, we ought automatically to be Muslim, therefore pro-Palestinian, therefore loyal to one camp through a chain of self-evidences that nobody ever demonstrates. The second, born by reaction among those whom the first irritates: since they want to enlist us there, we shall be pro-Israeli, out of contrariness, or because useful friendships have been promised — visas, markets, technologies.

No.

Both chains are false, and false in the same way: they turn our identity into a party card. The Kamite does not receive his geopolit-

ical position together with his Black identity. We are obliged to be neither pro-Palestine nor pro-Israel. We may look at this conflict from a distance, condemn the massacre of civilians whoever commits it, and refuse to make it a priority of our own struggle. That is neither lukewarmness nor indifference: it is the elementary right of a people to think for itself.

One more thing must be added, which is forgotten and which wounds. Not all Kamites are Muslim, not all are Christian, and many are neither. There are houses among us that never left the Ancestors and that owe no account to any of the books that came from outside. When it is decided, in Paris, in New York, in Doha or in Dakar, that "Black people" must belong to one camp in the name of a religion, those houses are erased with a single word – that is to say, a part of what we are. Every people, every tradition, every civilisation has its own concerns, its own urgencies and its own priorities; the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one illustration of this, and that is why I speak of it: not to settle a war that is not ours, but because among us it has become the instrument by which others claim to assign us a place.

II. Our position

It is simple, and it holds in one sentence which I want quoted whole:

We are neither the soldiers of Israel nor those of Palestine.

We are first of all responsible for our own house, our memory, our peoples and our future. This does not mean that we have no eyes. We condemn the massacre of civilians, without condition and

without distinguishing according to the hand that commits it: a child killed in a kibbutz and a child killed under the rubble of a building are two children killed. We condemn the deliberate attack on unarmed civilians and the taking of hostages; we condemn the starving of a population, the collective punishment of a people for the acts of a few, the destruction of hospitals and schools; and we condemn, on both sides, the humiliation of the living and the desecration of the dead. We condemn it because it is evil, not because it is our camp that suffers.

One must weigh what that sentence commits a man to, for many pronounce it without holding to it. To condemn without a camp is to condemn twice, and without reciprocity: nobody will thank you, and both sides will reproach you for not having shouted loudly enough for them. It is nevertheless the only way to remain a man whose word is worth something. He who has condemned only one camp has not condemned a crime: he has designated an adversary.

But we refuse what we are then expected to do, and this is where everything is decided: to adopt, along with the compassion, the whole package – one camp's religion, its reading of history, its alliances, its enemies, its slogans, its flags in our squares, its quarrels imported into our neighbourhoods. We are offered a hand for an emotion, and we are asked for the arm. We can feel with the victims without belonging to their camp. We can condemn injustice without adopting the religion, the history or the enemies of those who suffer it.

And I say to both camps, with the respect owed to peoples who suffer: we are not a makeweight. We are not a stock of votes in the General Assembly, nor a market for your weapons, nor a reserve of

demonstrators for your capitals, nor a moral guarantee to be produced when you are accused. We are peoples, with a continent, a history and dead of our own. When we speak of you, it will be because we have decided to.

III. The rule: we do not compare sufferings

Here I set down a rule of the Bwa Sacré, and I ask that it be remembered, for it sets us apart from many who speak. We never weigh the suffering of one people against that of another. We do not say “we had more dead”, we do not say “yours count for less”, we do not keep the books of mass graves. Whoever compares griefs has already left the ground of justice for that of competition, and he ends up saying, without meaning to, that one life is worth less than another.

This rule is not a nicety of language: it is a protection. Peoples who enter the competition of misfortunes lose twice over. They lose their dignity, because they end up displaying their wounds to earn the right to speak. And they lose their cause, because comparison calls for comparison, and someone will always be found to make light of what they have suffered in the name of what another has suffered. We have suffered enough from that bargaining not to impose it on others.

What we observe is of another order, and must be distinguished with care. The pain of peoples cannot be measured; the attention of the world can be measured very well: in minutes of television news, in resolutions, in special sessions, in summits, in marches, in collections, in statements from universities and companies. And

that attention is distributed in a way no arithmetic of suffering can explain. To say so is not to demand a turn in the spotlight for our dead. It is to refuse being required to feel an obligatory emotion for the dead of others, when the same emotion was never mobilised for our own.

Let there be no mistake: I hold this against neither the Palestinians nor the Israelis, who do not decide the schedules of the world's television stations. I state it as the fact of an order of attention that has never favoured us, and which we would be wrong to think will reverse itself because we shall have shouted well for others. It will reverse only on the day we tell our own affairs ourselves, in our own languages, with our own means. That is what the Bwa Sacré has undertaken.

IV. Our dead, our displaced, our languages

Let us look at our house, since nobody looks at it in our place. In Sudan, the war between two armies entered its fourth year in 2026: whole cities emptied, Darfur ravaged once more, El Fasher taken after eighteen months of siege and given over to massacre, and a famine which the international body that classifies hunger has confirmed in El Fasher itself and in other areas, with close to twenty million people in acute food insecurity. It is, according to the United Nations agencies themselves, the largest displacement crisis in the world. How many marches in the capitals for Sudan? How many Sudanese flags at the windows? How many students have camped on a university lawn for El Fasher?

Let us look further. In the east of the Congo, a war that has never truly ceased in thirty years, whose dead are counted in millions by the most serious estimates; women raped by the hundreds of thousands; and, beneath that soil, the minerals that make the telephones work on which the whole world is indignant about something else. In the Sahel, our villages attacked and emptied, our schools closed by the thousand, our displaced who have no name in the newspapers. In Ethiopia, a recent war whose exact toll nobody knows, for want of having looked for it. And everywhere, without a shot fired, our languages going out: I made that the subject of a solemn call a month ago, because a people that loses its speech loses what no war will give back.

Our history already has its forgotten dead, its displaced peoples, its destroyed cultures, its threatened languages and its memories to rebuild. It also has its unpaid debts: four centuries of the Atlantic trade, eastern trades longer still, a century of colonisation, and an international recognition that came only in the spring of 2026, when the General Assembly of the United Nations, by its resolution 80/250 of March 25, 2026, declared — these are its words and not ours, for we do not rank griefs — the trade and the racial enslavement of Africans the gravest crime against humanity. We waited generations for that. Nobody camped on a lawn to obtain it.

That is the house for which we are responsible. Whoever reproaches us for not putting a foreign war at the head of our urgencies should first explain what he himself has done for El Fasher — and if he has done nothing, he should understand that we owe him no account.

V. What the war of others already costs us

People think this conflict does not touch us. It touches us, but not at the point where we are asked to look at it: it touches us in the belly and in the purse, and it touched us before we had said a word.

Since the end of 2023, the war has extended into the Red Sea: ships attacked, shipping lines that stopped using the Suez Canal and went back around the Cape of Good Hope, ten to fourteen extra days at sea, insurance premiums multiplied, freight rates that leapt. Traffic through the canal collapsed and has returned only slowly; even in 2026 it has not recovered its former level. Who pays for that? Egypt, which lost billions in transit dues; Djibouti, Port Sudan, Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, whose services deteriorated; and the trader of Bamako or Abidjan, who saw the price of a container double without knowing why. Add wheat, fertiliser and fuel, which wars drive up among the poor before anyone else.

That is our real position in this affair: we are not spectators, we are the grass. We are asked to choose a side in a war whose logistical bill we pay without ever having been consulted. And when we ask who will pay, nobody answers; when we ask for a safe sea corridor for our imports, that interests none of the capitals demanding our solidarity.

There is a second cost, less visible and more cruel: the cost in aid. The world's humanitarian budgets are not elastic, and they follow attention. While the appeals for Gaza were covered at more than eighty per cent, those for Sudan, Chad, the Sahel and the Horn remained funded at around half, and rations were cut in camps where people already ate every other day. Nobody decided this

coldly; it is the mechanical effect of a world looking in the same direction. But the effect is counted in children.

It must be said plainly, because this is politics and not sentiment: the interest of the Kamite peoples in this war is that it should end. Not because one camp must win, but because peace reopens the routes, brings down freight costs, and frees the world's attention and the donors' money for the urgencies that are killing us. This is not a lukewarm moral position: it is the position of a continent that knows what it is paying.

VI. 1973, and what has been made of Africa in this conflict

We are spoken to as though we were entering this history today. We entered it more than fifty years ago, and we came out of it empty-handed: that is an experience, and a lesson.

After the war of October 1973, under pressure from the Organisation of African Unity and with the promise of Arab solidarity, almost every African state broke off diplomatic relations with Israel. They did so in the name of anti-colonial brotherhood, and many did so sincerely. Then came the oil shock, and Africa discovered that it had paid twice: the price of the barrel, and the loss of technical cooperation. The aid promised never came in the amounts announced. Ten years later, one by one, the same states restored their relations. We had been used as a bloc of votes, and dropped as a bloc of votes.

Nor do we forget the other side of that mirror. In those same years the State of Israel maintained close military and industrial coopera-

tion with apartheid South Africa, at the very moment when the whole Black world was calling for Pretoria to be isolated; in 1976 the South African prime minister was received in Jerusalem. Africans are not asked to forget that today, and we do not forget it.

And here is what touches us most directly, and it is recent. In December 2020 two normalisations were concluded with Israel; on the same day as one of them, Washington recognised Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a territory on the agenda of the United Nations for fifty years. The month before, Sudan had accepted normalisation in exchange for being removed from the American list of state sponsors of terrorism. We judge here neither the choice of Rabat nor that of Khartoum, which are sovereign: we say that in both cases the currency of exchange was Africa – an African territory in one case, the economic sovereignty of an African country in the other. We did not enter this conflict as actors: we were brought into it as the price.

Finally, in July 2021 the Commission of the African Union granted Israel observer status without consulting the member states; South Africa, Algeria, Nigeria and others protested; at the summit of February 2022 the decision was frozen and referred to a committee. What must be concluded from this? That there exists no single "African position" on this question, and that those who invoke one in order to bind us are inventing a unanimity that never existed. Our states are divided; our peoples are divided too; and that is their right.

VII. Anti-Black hatred also exists

Now something must be said that we are asked to keep quiet, and which explains part of our reserve. We are spoken to endlessly about two hatreds, and they are real: antisemitism, which led Europe to crimes whose shame it still carries; islamophobia, which today strikes millions of believers, including in our own cities. We condemn both, without reservation, and we shall fight them at home if they take root there. But antisemitism and islamophobia are not the only forms of hatred that exist. Anti-Black hatred exists too, and no one ever speaks of it unless forced to.

It exists in the Middle East and in certain Arab societies, where the word for an African has remained the word that meant slave, and where the trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades lasted thirteen centuries without any court, any repentance, any school textbook ever settling the account. The market of Zanzibar closed only in 1873; the caravans of the Sahara crossed our countries for more than a thousand years; and of that history there exists to this day no trial, no reparation, and no day of remembrance.

It exists in Libya, where in 2017 the world discovered, on film, Africans sold at auction for a few hundred dollars — what the Secretary-General of the United Nations called possible crimes against humanity, and which brought a referral to the Security Council before everyone moved on to something else. It exists in Mauritania, where slavery was abolished in 1981, criminalised in 2007 and again in 2015, and where United Nations rapporteurs still record the practice. It exists in the Gulf states, where the sponsorship system has left African and Asian workers without

passports and without recourse, and where our sisters working as domestic servants sometimes die without anyone claiming a body.

And one must be fair to the end, for this declaration chooses no camp: it exists in Israel too. That country airlifted tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews, in 1984 and in 1991, and it is a fact that no other state has done as much for Africans — it must be said, and said without wincing. And those same Ethiopians, once arrived, protested for decades against discrimination, police violence and contempt; the blood they gave was thrown away in the nineteen-nineties. Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers were detained there, labelled infiltrators and pushed to leave. Both camps have, on this question, their share of shadow. We have no reason to keep it quiet in order to satisfy either of them.

Let me be clearly understood: I am not drawing up an indictment against peoples. Arabs are not a hatred, Israelis are not a hatred, and I know just men in both worlds — scholars, friends. A hatred is not a people, and to confuse the two is precisely the fault we reproach in others when they commit it against us. I say only this: when loyalty is demanded of us, it is not forbidden to recall what we have suffered at the hands of those who demand it, and what we have never traded in return.

VIII. South Africa, our words, and the diaspora

South Africa will be held up against me. In December 2023 she brought proceedings against Israel before the International Court of Justice under the Genocide Convention; the Court ordered pro-

visional measures in 2024, the written pleadings have been exchanged, and the merits will not be argued before the end of the decade. It is the most resounding act an African state has performed in this affair, and we are told: there is Africa's position, fall in line.

My answer is that South Africa proves exactly the contrary of what is made of her. She did not act because she is African, nor because she is Black: she acted because she lived through apartheid, drew a doctrine from it, and chose, as a sovereign state, to commit her name, her money and her lawyers. It is a decision taken by a people out of its own memory, and it honours her. That is precisely what I claim for the Kamites: the right to decide out of ours. The respect I owe South Africa, I owe her for having chosen, not for having chosen that side; and those who applaud her today might ask themselves whether they would applaud her had she chosen otherwise.

One thing more, which concerns us directly: the words of this conflict have become ours. People speak of apartheid, and that is an African word, wrenched from our history by a people that endured it. People speak of genocide, and that is a notion our dead of Rwanda and Darfur know in their flesh. These words travel the world charged with our pain, and we are rarely consulted on the use made of them. We take them from no one: concepts belong to humanity the moment they are born. But we do recall that those who borrow them owe us at least the same attention when they apply at home — and that in 1994, when they applied to Rwanda, the world took a hundred days to wake up.

As for the diaspora, two memories there lay claim to our inheritance, and it must be said delicately, for both are sincere. On one side, since Ferguson in 2014, a current has drawn together the

struggle of Black Americans and the Palestinian cause, in the name of a shared experience of the police, the wall and the checkpoint; that current has its reasons, its poets and its martyrs. On the other, there is an old and real history between American Jews and the civil rights movement: in 1964, in Mississippi, two young Jewish activists were murdered alongside a Black activist for registering Black citizens to vote; in 1965 a rabbi marched beside Pastor King at Selma. Both memories exist. Neither may be invoked to command us, and whoever knows only one does not know the history.

The same holds for everyone else. That Senegalese, Black Americans or other Africans should choose to march for Palestine is their liberty, and I take nothing from them: some see in it the continuation of their own struggle, and they have the right to think so. But their commitment cannot become a collective obligation imposed on all Black peoples. A conviction that turns into a duty for others has changed its nature: it has become a tutelage. And of tutelage we have already had our fill.

IX. African Jews, African Arabs, and the sacred of others

People reason as though “Jew” and “Arab” designated worlds lying outside Africa, which we need only watch from afar. That is false, and the falsehood is the source of a great deal of foolishness.

There are African Jews. The Beta Israel lived for centuries on the high plateaux of Ethiopia; the synagogue of Djerba, in Tunisia, is among the oldest in the world and is living still; the communities of Morocco and Algeria gave scholars, musicians and merchants to our

cities. There are African Arabs: Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania and Sudan sit in the African Union, and the Arab world has had its foot on our continent for fourteen hundred years. When we are summoned to choose between "the Jews" and "the Arabs", we are in truth being asked to cut through the inside of our own house. We refuse.

A second thing concerns us, and few peoples understand it as well as we do. At the heart of this conflict there are holy places – a city three religions hold sacred, stones for which men have died for centuries. The modern world no longer understands this; it believes the matter is one of square metres. We know better. Every Bwa village has its sacred wood, which none may enter, where none may cut, to which no stranger is led; we know what a man is capable of when what holds his house upright is profaned. That is why we never mock the sacred of others, wherever it comes from. And that is why we say to both camps what our elders would say: a holy place taken by force ceases to be holy and becomes a barracks; what is sacred is not possessed, it is kept.

Finally, we know what it is for a land to be disputed between two legitimate memories. Our villages have such lands, our families have them, and our councils of elders spend whole seasons settling quarrels over fields in which each party speaks the truth. What we have learned is that an arbiter who arrives with a camp in his head settles nothing: he merely postpones the war. There is one more reason to keep our hands free. On the day a mediator is needed who belongs to nobody, there had better be one left.

X. Not importing the war of others

There is a reason of prudence that is seldom mentioned, and which should suffice on its own. We do not need one more fracture.

Our countries are mosaics. In the same town live Muslims, Christians, and houses that stayed with the Ancestors, and it holds because we have built, over centuries, mechanisms of cooling: the joking kinship, alliances between families, councils of elders, the marriage that stitches what politics tears. That fabric is strong, but it is not untearable. To import a foreign war, with its flags, its slogans and its accusations of treason, is to throw an ember onto that fabric. It has been seen elsewhere: peaceful societies where, in two years, neighbours stopped speaking to one another because of a war being fought five thousand kilometres away.

There is worse, and it concerns us directly. The armed movements that kill in the Sahel have never missed an opportunity to use a distant cause to recruit close to home. I have shown in an earlier writing that the jihad striking our villages is the fourth of a thousand-year series, and that it seeks neither justice nor Palestine: it seeks men. When an image of Gaza serves as a preacher's way into a Bwa, Dogon or Senufo village, it is not Palestine that wins: it is a katiba that gains a boy of fifteen. We have a duty to say so, even if it troubles those who, in good faith, circulate those images.

And we must look at the instrument through which all this enters our homes: the telephone. The emotion demanded of us is no longer carried by men, it is distributed by machines that have learned to measure anger and to feed it. Our young receive, without asking, a flood of images selected for indignation — often true,

sometimes old, sometimes fabricated, and today sometimes produced entirely by machines. Videos of other wars have been passed off as this one, and synthetic images taken for proof. A people whose opinion is manufactured elsewhere is not a sovereign people. I have called on the Kamites to seize artificial intelligence in order to save their languages; I call on them here to mistrust it as one mistrusts a river in flood when it carries the anger of others. Verify before you share. Ask who gains something from your emotion.

XI. Non-alignment, one rule for all

What we say here is not new, and we did not invent it. In 1955, at Bandung, peoples barely out of empire refused to choose between the two blocs that were dividing the world, and founded a politics upon that refusal; in 1961 at Belgrade they made it a movement; in 1963 at Addis Ababa Africa gave itself an organisation. They were not saying that the blocs were equal; they were saying they would be the soldiers of neither. Our elders carried that, and Africa gained a voice of its own for a generation.

Non-alignment is not the neutrality of the coward, who looks away to avoid trouble. It is a demanding position: it requires judging each act on its own merits, without the convenience of a flag. He who belongs to a camp knows in advance what he must condemn and what he must excuse; he no longer has to think, and he ends up excusing the inexcusable so as not to give the other side a point. The non-aligned man must condemn twice, and nobody thanks him for it. It is harder. It is more honest.

From that position follows a requirement we address to the whole world: one rule for all. International law is worth something only if it is worth something everywhere; it is worth nothing if it descends upon the weak and stops at the gates of the powerful. We know this subject better than anyone: until 2016, every investigation opened by the International Criminal Court concerned an African situation, to the point that the African Union debated a collective withdrawal. We do not ask that less be judged; we ask that everyone be judged in the same way. The Geneva Conventions are not a text of variable geometry. The Genocide Convention of 1948 is not an instrument reserved for certain courtrooms. That is the Kamite position: we are not on the side of a state, we are on the side of a rule that applies to all, ourselves included.

And here something must be said that almost no one has said. On October 7, 2023, among the dead of that day there were Africans: young Tanzanians who had come to learn agriculture on farms in southern Israel. Clemence Mtenga was killed. Joshua Mollel, twenty-one years old, who dreamed of starting his own agricultural business back home, was killed as well, and his body was carried away; it took two years for him to return to Tanzania and for his family to bury him. There was no summit for Joshua Mollel, no special session, no march. There was none either for the Afro-Palestinians of Gaza, descendants of Africans who came centuries ago, dead beneath the rubble without anyone ever publishing their number. An African boy killed and held for two years, African families buried on the other side of those same lines, in a war that belonged to none of them: that is the place truly given to us in this affair, and that is why we speak first of our own children.

And since we shall be asked where the limit of our reserve lies, I state it, so that it is written. We shall come out of our reserve if Africans are killed or despoiled in this war — and there are such, workers and students, on both sides of the lines, of whom nobody speaks. We shall come out of it if our states are asked for soldiers, bases or votes in exchange for payment. We shall come out of it if our sea routes, our ports or our food supplies are touched. We shall come out of it if an African people is once again used as currency in an agreement between powers. Outside those cases, our strength remains employed at home.

XII. What we decide

Our elders have always said it: when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. And in this war, as in so many others, the grass is first of all the innocent — those who neither decided, nor armed, nor voted, and who bear everything. This does not mean that the suffering of others gives us any joy; on the contrary, it is because it reaches us that we refuse to turn it into ammunition. For that is what a camp does: it takes the dead and makes them into arguments; every child becomes a piece of evidence, every bereavement a document in a file. We do not want that for the dead of others, because we do not want it for our own.

Since we refuse the priorities assigned to us, we must state our own, otherwise the refusal is only a word. Here they are, as the Bwa Sacré has instituted them in its writings, and in the order in which they press upon us.

First, memory and speech: to record our elders, to build the corpora of our languages, to document our knowledge, before the fire takes the library. Then the worker: to attend to the worker and not to the work, at the hour when artificial intelligence makes work volatile and our parents' post departs; we celebrate the man, not the activity. Then the safety of our peoples of the interior, from the Sahel to the gates of Abidjan, who gave battle four times in a thousand years before withdrawing into the bush, and whom no one has ever avenged. Then the land, the civil register and the proof: that a Kamite may prove who he is and what he owns, at home, without depending on a register kept elsewhere. Then our children, and what they are taught about us. Then our routes, our ports and our food supplies, whose fragility the fifth chapter has shown. And finally the sacred, which holds all the rest upright.

Not one of these urgencies is settled in Gaza or in Jerusalem. All are settled at home, and nobody will settle them in our place. That is why we keep our strength. A people has only a limited quantity of indignation, of money and of youth: he who spends them on the affairs of others will have none left for his own, and will afterwards be astonished to find himself poor, divided, and mourned by nobody.

To the young Kamites who read this I want to say three things. The first: you will be asked again, "whose side are you on?" Answer without lowering your eyes, and answer in full — we are for the innocent, everywhere; we are against massacres, everywhere; we are the soldiers of no one. The second: you will be told that your reserve is a betrayal. Then ask what the man speaking to you has done for El Fasher, for the Kivu, for the languages of your grandparents; and if he has done something, listen to him, for he will have

earned a hearing. The third: beware the comfort of belonging. It is sweet to have a flag, a team, appointed enemies; that is how peoples enter the wars of others and come out with nothing.

What this declaration institutes

So that none of this should depend on the mood of a day or on the voice of a single man, I fix in five points the position of the Bwa Sacré, valid until the assembly of sages, by its vote, amends it.

First point. The Kamite does not receive his geopolitical position together with his identity. No belonging of race, colour or continent amounts to enlistment in a foreign quarrel.

Second point. The Bwa Sacré condemns the massacre of civilians, the deliberate attack on non-combatants, the taking of hostages, the starving of a population and collective punishment, without regard to the author, the camp or the religion. This condemnation is unconditional and confers no right of enlistment.

Third point. We never compare the sufferings of peoples. We observe the inequality of the world's attention, and we answer it by telling our own affairs ourselves.

Fourth point. No African people shall serve as currency of exchange, reserve of votes, military base, arms market or moral guarantee in this war or in any other. An African territory is the price of no agreement.

Fifth point. We demand one rule for all: the law that judges the weak must judge the powerful. And we shall come out of our re-

serve in the cases set out in the eleventh chapter, which stand as written.

Closing

I have not written these pages against anyone. I have written them so that people should stop telling us who we are. We ask no one to approve our reserve; we ask that it be respected, as we respect those who have chosen otherwise. And we refuse, definitively, that a man's colour should stand in place of his thought.

May peace come upon that land, for those who live there and for us who pay from afar. May the children of both sides stop dying. And may the world, on the day it has finished counting those dead, remember that it has others to count, far away to the south, which it has never named.

We are for the innocent, everywhere. We are against massacres, everywhere. We are the soldiers of no one. And we are, first and for a long time to come, responsible for our own house.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré
BAZURU
Abidjan, September 17, 2026

— Chapter IX —

Kamite, Who Are You?

Kamitism is not a religion: a federation of spiritualities — nature, the ancestors, tolerance —, why African diversity is a treasure for all humanity, and what a free people must be able to defend

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition — original French edition:
Kamite, qui es-tu ?

Preliminary note

We spend our time explaining what we are not. We are asked for our prophet, our holy book, our clergy, our paradise, our hell; we are asked whether we worship idols, whether we sacrifice children, whether we believe in the devil. We answer no, no, no, and the conversation stops there, because we never have time to reach the only thing that matters: what we are. This declaration exists for that, and it is the first of the Bwa Sacré that answers to no one.

It targets no religion and no believer. I do not compare faiths, I do not rank them, and I ask no one to leave his own: there are Christians, Muslims and men who believe in nothing in our own houses, and that causes no difficulty among us – it is indeed one of the things this declaration must explain. What I criticise are badly framed questions, and a habit of taking the shape of one family of beliefs for the universal shape of all spirituality.

A word on form. What I write here is what can be written. In each of our houses there is a part that does not go into a book and is transmitted elsewhere: the reader will sense it in outline, and is asked not to go looking for it. The rest is stated plainly, with its sources, and can be verified without us: the references are at the end of the volume.

PART ONE

What We Are

The federation, its three references, its houses, its invisible world, and diversity as method

I. The questions we are asked

Let us begin with the list, since it is put to us at every encounter. We have no prophet. We have no revealed book. We have no clergy, no ordination, no hierarchy that dispenses the sacred to a flock. We have no paradise to earn and no hell to fear. We have no Satan: among us, evil has no prince, it has causes and reparations. We have no obligatory prayer at fixed hours. We have no conversion, no mission, no holy war. We have no one to save, and least of all against his will.

Faced with this list, our interlocutor usually concludes one of two things: either we have nothing, or we are hiding something. Both conclusions are false, and they come from the same error: we are

being measured with an instrument that was not built for us. When an African spirituality is asked for its prophet and its book, it is not being questioned — it is being made to sit an examination whose syllabus was written elsewhere.

Take the simplest image. If a man used to houses with storeys enters a Bwa compound and asks, "where is the staircase?", then, failing to find one, concludes that we do not know how to build, he is twice mistaken — first because the compound is an accomplished architecture, and second because he has not seen that it solved differently the problem he believed had only one solution. Our spirituality is a compound, not a tower. It spreads instead of rising; it has several entrances; it shelters people who do not think alike; and it has stood longer than most towers.

What this manner of questioning does to our own people must also be said. Generations of African children learned to answer "we have nothing", then to feel ashamed, then to go elsewhere for a garment to cover that shame. What was not understood was called animism — a word invented in the nineteenth century to rank others at the bottom of a ladder, and which we never chose. I have written it elsewhere and I say it again: what is offered to us at the point of a blade or of contempt is not worth what we already have. But it still has to be said, and said plainly. That is the purpose of what follows.

II. A federation of spiritualities

Here is the sentence that sums everything up, and that costs our religious friends the greatest effort:

Kamitism is not a religion: it is a federation of spiritualities.

A religion, in the sense the word carries everywhere, presupposes a common creed, a text, an authority that declares the truth, and a clear boundary between those inside and those outside. A federation presupposes none of that. It presupposes houses that existed before it, that go on existing after it, and that agree on a few common things without giving up what makes them themselves. The African Union does not ask Mali to become Ghana. We do not ask the Dogon to become Bwa, nor the houngan of Port-au-Prince to become Bamanan.

What the federation holds in common comes down to three words: nature, the ancestors, tolerance. What it does not touch is everything else — rites, names, prohibitions, calendars, invisible beings, accounts of origin, the language in which one speaks to the dead. That remainder is no detail: it is the heart of each house, and the federation exists precisely so that it should not be planed down.

So it must be said, and said forcefully, what the federation is not. It is not a Church that has found itself a pope. It defines no dogma, dispenses no salvation, excommunicates no one. It replaces no tradition and claims to summarise none.

What, then, does it actually do? It keeps a register, and that is its first office: lineages deposited, sacred names of which the bearer remains master, heirs designated by the person concerned and by nobody else. It dates: every act, every writing is signed and timestamped in a public chain that none can rewrite, so that no one may say one day that we invented our past last week. It fixes a few minimal common rules — of the name, of the succession of the title, of the welcome given to newcomers — and publishes them. It carries a voice when others speak of us without us. It institutes days: we

gave back to the worker the five days our ancestors had placed outside of time. That is all. A registry, a calendar, a voice.

It must now be said where this form comes from, for it is no desk invention. It comes from the Bwa country. Among us there is no central power: every village stands by itself, decides its own affairs, and nobody waits for an order to come down from anywhere. We were long called a "people without a chief", and we let it be said — I have explained elsewhere what that reputation concealed and what it saved us from. But the liberty was no façade: it was real, daily, and it produced men who ask nobody's permission to think. I am naturally accustomed to depending on no central power; thirty years without an employer are the consequence of that, not the cause. It is this great Bwa liberty that inspired me in representing the Kamites.

I have therefore instituted Kamite liberty, and that is precisely why we speak of a federation and not of an empire. The Kamites need that liberty in order to evolve within their spirituality: a house that must ask permission before moving ceases to live, it merely lasts. No one in the federation will wait for a centre to tell it how to pray, what to believe, when to keep silent.

From this I draw a rule that is aimed at myself, and I want it written before all the rest: **the BAZURU who attempted to reign would, by that fact alone, be disqualified.** Not deposed after a trial: disqualified of himself, like a man who leaves the game by cheating. The title exists to keep, to arbitrate and to speak when speech is needed; it does not exist to command free men. Let those who come after me know it, and let those living today apply it to me should I ever forget.

I know this disappoints. Many of our members have been trained, by states as by religions, to expect a sovereign who reigns, an authority that decides, a word that spares them the trouble of thinking. They look among us for what they have elsewhere, and they will not find it. This is not a lack of organisation: it is the organisation itself.

For the order the Kamites need is a light order, and it holds in one word: a calendar. Not a catalogue of prescriptions, not a list of what must be believed or done, but common moments. Each does as he wishes — but in such a season. That is what the federation brings, and what was missing: when a continent and a diaspora accomplish the same thing at the same moment, each in his own manner and in his own language, they cease to be a dust of houses without ceasing to be themselves. A calendar synchronises; it does not command.

A last word on discretion, since I am often questioned about it. I decided that the title would remain discreet, and I decided it for a reason of circumstance: it is what suits the events of the moment. It is not a dogma, it is not a law of nature, and it is above all not one more secret. The day something else is preferable, it will be done. In this matter there is no constraint whatever.

What the federation will never do must be written too: it will not tell a Dogon which mask to dance, a Bamanan initiate at which degree to stop, a vodun priest which power to call, a man whether he must believe. The day a secretariat claims such a thing, it will have ceased to be a federation and become a Church, and I ask that I be read again on that day.

I shall be asked why a federation at all, if each house is sufficient in itself. Because our houses, taken one by one, were silenced one after

another over a thousand years. Because what is not written is not defended, and what is not defended is narrated by others. And because the age now coming — the age of machines that learn — will give speech to those who have deposited something, and withhold it from the rest. The federation is a shelter, not a temple.

III. The three references: nature, the ancestors, tolerance

What is there in common between the Bwa Sacré, the Dogon societies, the Bamanan initiations, the vodun of the Bight of Benin, the bwiti of Gabon, the Ifá of the Yoruba, the Akan cults of the rivers and a hundred other houses? If one looks for a creed, one will find nothing, and that is what leads the hasty to say there is no unity. If one looks for what these houses do in the same way, one finds three things, and those three suffice to found a federation.

Nature. With us the sacred is not in a building: it is in a place of the world. Every Bwa village has its sacred wood, which none may enter, where none may cut, to which no stranger is led; it is the true house, and it is also, incidentally, the last forest standing when everything else has been cleared. Elsewhere it is a river, a spring, a mountain, a tree, a rock, a grove. Earth, fire, water and air are not symbols: they are interlocutors. A people that treats the earth as a person does not treat it as a stock; which is why the ecologists, who took two centuries to rediscover this, would do well to read us before explaining us to ourselves.

The ancestors. This is the spine. The dead have not left: they have passed to the other side, and they remain members of the house,

with rights and duties. One speaks to them, feeds them, consults them, answers to them. This produces a concrete morality: one does not shame those who are watching. And it produces a memory: where others retain a dogma, we retain a lineage. I know mine over ten generations, from Sounlé, born about 1812, to my son born in 2012; it is deposited in the register of the Bwa Sacré. Few Kamites can say as much today, and that is precisely what we mean to repair.

Tolerance. It follows from the first two and it is our most distinctive mark. A spirituality attached to a place and to a lineage has no reason to covet the neighbour's lineage or place. It converts no one, because there is nothing to conquer: the neighbour has his dead, we have ours.

To make a Kamite understand this, I use what I know best. The Bwa have no central power, and yet they are a people: they have the Do, which all acknowledge and which gathers them, and they have bwamu, a single language from Djibasso to Ségou, by which they know one another without needing papers. Two bonds, and no command. Transpose them and you have the federation: in place of the Do, nature, the ancestors and spirituality, which all Kamites acknowledge; in place of bwamu, Pan-Africanism, which gathers us around the ancestors and by which we know one another from one continent to the next. And just as the Bwa are free, the Kamites are free.

These three references can be verified everywhere, including among those who do not know us. Vodun holds to the earth and the ancestors; bwiti holds to the forest and the ancestors; Ifá holds to the word of the elders deposited in the *odù*; the Dogon hold to the

cliff and to their lineages. We did not manufacture this intersection: we observed it, and we named it.

IV. Maximal tolerance

One must weigh what that word covers among us, for it is worn thin everywhere else.

In the federation there are people who believe in no god. There are people who believe in a single creator God — and our languages have had the word for it long before the missionaries arrived. There are people who acknowledge several powers, each with its domain and its name. These three families are in the same house, they sit at the same wake, they drink from the same calabash, and no one asks anyone to decide. This is not a modern convenience: it has always been so, because what binds us is not a belief but a way of living with the earth and with the dead.

Why this works must be said, for we are credited with a virtue where there is first of all a structure. Among the Kamites, each addresses *his own* ancestors. I make sacrifices to mine; how does that concern you? You have yours. There is nothing to quarrel over, because there is no common object to be won: my lineage claims nothing over yours, and none of my dead lay claim to yours. Where a doctrine asserts a single truth valid for all, the neighbour who believes otherwise becomes an error to be corrected; where each house speaks to its own dead, the neighbour is not an error, he is simply of another house. All our tolerance lies in that difference, and it is logical before it is moral.

From this follows what strangers find extraordinary. A man is not shocked that his wife should go to her own family to ask a service of her ancestors: she is not betraying him, she is conducting family business, and that family is not his. There is nothing to forgive, nothing to authorise, nothing to negotiate. And from this follows too the absence of apostasy: one cannot desert a lineage, one cannot disown a dead man, one cannot change ancestors as one changes one's mind.

We go further than anything I have seen elsewhere: we accept that a spouse should be of another confession, and it makes no drama. A Bwa woman may go and offer a chicken to her ancestors, and her husband, who perhaps goes to church or to the mosque, sees nothing abnormal in it; he will wait for her, and in the evening they will eat together. Look for that in the religions of the blade and tell me what you find. In my village there is not a single mosque, and there has never been violence over it: we drove no one out; nobody came to settle in order to convert us, that is all.

This tolerance has a consequence our friends find hard to grasp: we have no apostasy. One cannot leave us, since we hold no one; one cannot betray us by praying elsewhere. A Kamite who bears a Muslim or Christian given name, who fasts or takes communion, remains what he is: the son of his dead. I have instituted this in writing so that no zealot may one day claim the contrary: the Bwa Sacré opens its door to those who bear a Muslim name as to all others, and asks no one to renounce anyone.

A tolerant tradition is not for all that a frozen tradition, and I must say here what we have changed. The door of the holy of holies stayed closed to women for centuries among us, for a precise reason

I have told elsewhere and which goes back to the fall of Soumaoro Kanté: our houses had concluded that a woman could overcome anyone at all. I draw the opposite conclusion: a faculty that brought down the greatest of us is better had on one's own side than against one. So I opened the Bwa Sacré to women and instituted the Queen Mothers, and I did not negotiate it. Let no one conclude that the federation may reform its houses: I reformed my own, which is the right and the duty of the man who answers for it. Each house will decide for itself, and in its own hour.

Finally, tolerance is not indifference, and it has a limit: he who comes among us to convert, to forbid, to raze a sacred wood or to tell a woman what she must wear, meets a refusal. We attack no one; we yield nothing. A thousand years of the blade did not make us deny the Ancestors; no speech will manage it.

V. The houses of the federation

A federation is described by its states. I name only a few here, with the respect owed to what one does not oneself practise, and without claiming to speak in their place.

The Bwa, between the Bani and the Volta, in Mali and Burkina Faso: villages without walls, each with its sacred forest, three passages that make a life, a single language from north to south over more than a thousand kilometres, and an order which the reputation of being a "people without a chief" long protected. **The Dogon**, our neighbours of the cliff, less than two kilometres from our own country: a cosmogony of formidable complexity, masks as tall as trees, a ritual calendar that runs over sixty years. **The**

Bamanan, with their successive societies of initiation, where knowledge is given by degrees and never whole. **The Senufo** and their *poro*, a school that lasts seven years and makes a boy into a man useful to all.

Vodun of the Bight of Benin, of Togo and Nigeria, with its named divinities, its convents, its drums, and its descendants in the Americas — Haiti, Cuba, Bahia — where it survived the slave trade, prohibition and ridicule, which ought to silence those who take it for superstition. **Ifá** of the Yoruba, a system of divination and above all a corpus of knowledge, proclaimed by UNESCO in 2005 as part of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity, of which I shall speak again. **Bwiti** of Gabon, among the Mitsogo and the Fang, with iboga, three-night vigils and the songs that open the passage. **The Akan cults** of rivers and of days, where every child receives the name of the day of its birth. And, at the other end of the continent, the **houses of southern and eastern Africa**, the diviners, the healers, the ancestors called by the clan.

None of these houses resembles another. Their invisible beings do not bear the same names, their prohibitions differ, their accounts of origin sometimes contradict one another. And yet put their elders in the same courtyard: they will agree about the earth, about the dead, and about the necessity of forcing no one. That is the federation. It is not to be built: it has been there all along, and only a name and a register were missing.

VI. The visible world and the invisible world

If one wishes to understand a single thing about us, let it be this. We hold that the visible world is not the whole world, and that it is indeed the smaller part. Around what the eye sees extends a vaster invisible world, peopled, ordered, with its laws, its inhabitants and its paths. The dead are there, but they are not there alone.

This is no vague belief: it is an architecture, and every house of the federation has its own. Dogon cosmogony describes a creation in stages, primordial couples, disorders repaired; ethnologists have filled volumes with it since Marcel Griaule, and still argue over what they understood — which ought to make modest anyone who thinks he has grasped our affairs in a single visit. Ifá organises the world into two hundred and fifty-six signs that are read like a library. Vodun names its powers one by one and assigns them domains. Among us, not everything is named, and what is not named exists no less.

What follows matters: between the visible and the invisible there is no wall, there are passages, and those passages are guarded. That is the whole meaning of our ceremonies. The child is presented to the Ancestors; one enters the bush; the soul is released when a man dies — not the burial, which puts away the body, but the funeral, which calls the soul and returns it to its place. A man who has not been presented is a man without an address in the invisible: I am such a man, by a measure of war taken by my parents, and I have written it publicly rather than hide it.

Our friends then ask: do you believe in it? The question, once again, comes from elsewhere. Among us one does not subscribe to the

invisible as one would sign a creed: one conducts oneself properly towards it, as one conducts oneself properly towards the living. A sacrifice entrusted to another is deemed performed; one does not haggle over the price of an animal destined for the fetish; the cord stays on the fetish; and if the Ancestors refuse, the refusal is accepted. These are rules of conduct, not articles of faith. A man who doubts and acts correctly is one of ours; a man who affirms and acts badly is not.

Let there be no mistake, then: we do believe, and the proof is in what we do when the lineage is missing. A man who does not know his genealogy is not left without an address: before the fetish he spits, and by that spittle he presents himself, since he cannot present himself through his fathers. His saliva carries his person. This is no desperate expedient: it is a man taking the safer road. There lies the whole Kamite logic — we do not argue about what we believe, we put ourselves in order, because it is safer.

From this follows our way of treating evil, and it is perhaps what separates us most from our religious friends. We have no Satan: nobody among us invented a prince of evil to whom one might attribute what a man has done with his own hands. Evil is not a power at war with another: it is a disorder — a word given and taken back, a prohibition crossed, blood spilt, a share denied to the one it was owed to. A disorder has causes that can be named, responsible persons who can be seated, and a reparation that can be carried out.

That is why our central institution is not a court that punishes but a tree under which people talk. Under the palaver tree one does not look first for the guilty party: one looks for what has been broken and for what must be laid down to close it again — words, an animal,

a compensation, sometimes an alliance. Nobody leaves while the matter remains open, and when it is closed, it is closed: it is not reopened, and a man is not pursued for thirty years with a fault he has repaired. He who has paid has paid. It is a justice of restoration, and the world is groping its way back to it today, believing it has invented it.

That is why there is among us neither paradise nor hell. The invisible is not a reward to come, it is a present neighbourhood. One does not enter it after a judgement: one enters it because one has died and one's people have done what was needed. And one is not punished there eternally: evil is repaired here, among the living, with words, animals and gestures that the elders know.

VII. The mask, our signature

To make a stranger understand what our invisible is, I tell him: go to the museum, and look at our masks.

An African mask is not a portrait. It copies neither a face, nor an animal, nor anything encountered in nature. It comes from the imagination, and it represents precisely what stands between the tangible and the intangible: a power, an ancestor, a function, a passage. That is why its proportions are not those of a man, why a Bwa mask may carry a plank three metres high, why the eyes are cylinders or slits. The artist did not fail: he was not trying to resemble. He was making visible something that has no face.

Europe understood this through its painters before its scholars. In 1907 a young man visited the ethnographic museum of the Trocadéro in Paris, saw masks from Africa there, and came out shaken;

he abandoned the copying of the real and painted *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*. Picasso himself said what he had understood that day: that these objects were not decorative sculptures but intercessors, made to act upon forces. Everything later called modern art came, in good part, out of that encounter. Our houses needed no museum to know it: we have been making intercessors for centuries, and we dance them.

What is awkward must be added. These masks are in the display cases of Paris, London, Berlin, Brussels and New York, in their tens of thousands, and a considerable part of them arrived there through conquest, plunder or forced sale — a report commissioned by France in 2018 established this and opened the debate on restitution, which advances slowly. We say so without anger and without pleading: these objects are not orphan works, they are pieces of living spiritualities, and some of them should never have left the wood. Let those who keep them begin at least by saying what they are, instead of labelling them "primitive art".

And let our young understand this: when the whole world admires our masks in its museums, it is admiring, without knowing it, the material proof that our ancestors thought the invisible with an inventive power the West took twenty centuries to permit itself.

VIII. Why we have no holy book

Let us return to the question that always comes back: where is your book? The honest answer has three parts.

First, we have no book because we have no revelation. Our houses do not claim that a word came down once, to one man, in one place,

and must be preserved intact. What we have is of another nature: a knowledge accumulated, corrected, transmitted by degrees, of which no one holds the whole — not even the oldest. A corpus without an author, which is verified in use.

Second, our word was deposited somewhere other than in writing, and that is neither a lag nor a lack. It is in the language, in the proverbs, in the songs, in the names, in the masks, in the gestures of the rite, in the order of the drums, in the layout of a compound. Ifá is an immense corpus learned by heart, organised into two hundred and fifty-six chapters, which the diviner recites: a book that never needed paper. Amadou Hampâté Bâ said it in a sentence quoted everywhere and heard nowhere: in Africa, when an old man dies, a library burns. A library. The word is exact.

Third, a part of this knowledge must not be written, and that is a decision, not a negligence. What is transmitted in the bush is transmitted there because the place, the moment and the person are part of the meaning; putting it into a book would not preserve it, it would kill it neatly. Every house of the federation knows that line and keeps it.

That said, one thing has changed, and that is why I write. What is not deposited disappears, and what disappears is narrated by others. So we now distinguish two domains: the public heritage, which must be recorded, documented, dated, timestamped, secured and made accessible; and what belongs to the sacred, which is not handed over indiscriminately to machines or to the world. To safeguard does not mean to disclose everything. That is the rule I laid down in last month's call, and it holds for the whole federation.

IX. Black people, the cradle, and the diaspora

One objection returns regularly, and it sometimes comes from our own: the diaspora is not African, it no longer has a village, a language, a lineage; by what right does it call itself Kamite? The question is asked on both sides of the Atlantic, and it deserves better than an evasion.

Here is our answer. They are Black. They therefore descend from men who left this place, torn from houses that were our houses. And beyond the slave trade itself there is the best-established fact of modern science: the whole of humanity came out of Africa. Our species appeared here some three hundred thousand years ago — the oldest known remains of *Homo sapiens* have been dated in Morocco and in Ethiopia — and all the peoples of the earth descend from it. Africa is not one continent among others: it is the cradle. There is the common ancestor we share, and it is older than all genealogies.

And our ancestors are not only behind us: they are within us. Modern science says it in its own way — every man carries, written in his DNA, the trace of those he descends from, and today one can read in the blood of a man of Bahia or of Chicago the region of Africa his people left. What our houses knew by memory, biology confirms in the body. The dead remain members of the house: they are inscribed in it physically.

The exact consequence must be drawn, without exaggerating in either direction. The Kamite is not defined by a passport, nor by a village, nor by command of a language. He is defined by a descent and by a choice: the descent binds him to the cradle, the choice

binds him to the Ancestors. A man of Chicago, of Salvador da Bahia, of Port-au-Prince, of Fort-de-France or of London who decides to seek his dead and to conduct himself properly towards them is one of ours, even if he does not know from which port his forebears sailed. We shall not ask him for papers; we shall give him a register.

This is where Pan-Africanism enters, and it enters by the only door that is solid: respect for the ancestors. We are not Pan-Africanists by ideology, nor from nostalgia for an empire, nor because we dream of a continental state. We are so because our dead are the same, and because what was done to our dead was done to all. Identity gathers us, spirituality remains diverse, and Pan-Africanism is the political form of the respect we owe the Ancestors. Three distinct things, articulated, none of which crushes the other two.

To those of the diaspora who still hesitate, I say this: you do not have to choose between what you have become and what you come from. The federation asks you to renounce no religion, no country, no language. It asks only that you stop believing yourselves born of nowhere.

X. Diversity as method

I come now to what is, for the engineer that I am, the heart of the matter. Our diversity is presented to us as a weakness: no single book, no single authority, no single doctrine, therefore nothing solid. I maintain the opposite, and I shall demonstrate it with the tools of my trade.

Take a mathematical image, the simplest one. To describe the world is to choose a basis in which to situate oneself, as one chooses axes in a vector space. A single culture supplies one basis; everything it can describe, it describes in that basis, and whatever cannot be decomposed there becomes invisible to it. Two independent cultures supply two bases: not two copies of the same thing, but two ways of cutting up the real. What is difficult in one is sometimes trivial in the other. This is the most commonplace principle in science: one changes basis in order to make a problem solvable.

Now Africa is the continent that holds the greatest number of independent bases still alive: more than two thousand languages, hundreds of kinship systems, dozens of ways of counting, of naming colours, of cutting up time, of organising space, of classifying plants and diseases. It is, in an engineer's terms, the largest reserve of alternative representations available to the human species. Each time one of these languages dies, the whole of humanity loses a basis — not a folklore, a basis.

And I add what our elders would say more simply than I. If one holds that a creator is at the origin of life, then it is he who made the DNA, and he who willed that no man should be identical to another, that no people should think like its neighbour, that no language should duplicate the one before it. Diversity is therefore not an accident to be corrected, nor a disorder to be reduced: it is what was willed. He who claims to erase it in the name of a single truth is not correcting men: he is correcting the creator.

Those who ask us to unify in the name of efficiency are therefore asking us, without knowing it, to destroy our principal asset. A federation is exactly the right form: it gives a common order

without reducing the bases to one. It protects diversity instead of averaging it. And it must not protect it as one protects a ruin: it must make it evolve, produce, confront and apply itself. Conserving is not enough; these knowledges must go to work.

XI. What our diversity has already produced

I now give four examples, verifiable, to be set before anyone who thinks us without contribution.

Counting otherwise. The Yoruba of Nigeria count in base twenty, not base ten, and their system uses subtraction – forty-five is said as "five taken from fifty" – which demands a mental agility our schools no longer teach. This is no curiosity: it is another basis, in the proper sense, and the linguists and mathematicians who have studied it regard it as one of the most elaborate numeral systems ever recorded.

Binary before the machines. The Ifá of the Yoruba, and its cousin the Fa practised among the Fon and the Ewe, rests on eight marks that can take only two values; eight marks of two values give two hundred and fifty-six figures, the *odù*, each attached to a corpus of narratives and prescriptions. In other words: a byte. Our elders handled eight-bit words, and a library indexed by those words, well before Europe formalised binary notation, and researchers have shown that these two-valued divination systems arose in Africa before passing through the Arab world into Europe. UNESCO inscribed Ifá on the heritage of humanity in 2005. Let us no longer be asked what we have contributed to computing.

The languages. This is the worst-guarded treasure. The click languages of southern Africa possess the richest sound inventories in the world: Taa, also called !xóõ, spoken by a few thousand people in Botswana and Namibia, holds the world record for the number of consonants — more than a hundred by the usual analysis, with five click families, dozens of vowels and tones. Add to that the tonal languages of all West Africa, where the pitch of the voice changes the meaning of the word, the Bantu noun-class languages, agreement systems that exist nowhere else. What this represents for the science of language, for speech recognition, for the understanding of the human brain, nobody yet knows, because nobody has finished studying it. And these languages are dying while we speak.

Living together. I add a fourth example, because it touches what the world most needs today. Our houses have always known how to make people who do not think alike live together in the same village; and they have precise institutions for it, not good intentions: the joking kinship, which allows two peoples to trade ritual insults instead of blows and which has defused wars; alliances between families; the councils where people talk until the matter is closed; the age sets that make all the boys of one year brothers across lineages. A sociologist would call these conflict-reduction devices; we call it living. No university in the world has produced the complete theory of it, and yet the age is looking for it everywhere.

That is why, last month, I issued a solemn call for the recording and documentation of our languages. Let no one mistake its scope: this is not a Kamite affair. A language that disappears carries off a way of thinking from which the whole of humanity might have drawn something. The true wealth of Africa is not beneath its soil: it is in

the mouths of its old people, and it is going out while the subsoil is being fought over.

XII. The universal we are served

One word remains to be said about the word most used against us: universal. We are told that progress, law, reason, beauty, spirituality itself have a universal form, and that our ways of doing things are local particularities destined to dissolve into it. Let us examine that.

Almost always, what is presented to us as universal is the particular form one area of the world gave to a thing, and had the strength to impose on the others. Decimal numeration is particular. The calendar is particular. The list of instruments in an orchestra is particular. The idea that a spirituality must have a founder, a text and a clergy is particular — it is the form taken by three religions born in the same region of the world. To take that form for the universal form, and then to conclude that we have nothing because we do not fill it, is not a piece of reasoning: it is a mirror held up to us with the reproach that we do not resemble it.

I do not say there is no universal. I say it lies ahead of us, not behind: it will be built from the meeting of the bases, and it is not yet written. A true universal would not begin by asking others to be silent; it would begin by counting what they know. It would not reduce the two thousand languages of Africa to a touching heritage; it would make them sources of science. It would not file our masks under "primitive art"; it would ask what they do.

And we have something to bring to it that the age cruelly lacks: a way of holding together people who do not believe the same thing

without requiring that they end up believing the same thing. The world is tearing itself apart today over questions of belonging; we have a thousand years' experience of a house where the atheist, the believer in one God and the believer in several powers eat from the same dish. That is not an ethnographic curiosity. It is a social technology, and the world will need it.

PART TWO

What We Defend

Liberty is not disarmament: the two faults of history, what threatens us, and how a people without a central power defends itself without becoming what it fights

I. Liberty is not disarmament

Everything I have written so far might give the impression that we are a people of gentle men who let the storm pass. That would be a dangerous reading, and I must close it myself, here, before someone else uses it against us.

The liberty I have instituted is not disarmament. A federation without a central power is not a federation without strength: it is a federation in which strength does not serve to command one's own but to protect them. These are two entirely different things, and most empires never learned to tell them apart: they armed a centre,

and the centre turned against the people before the enemy had even arrived.

So the thing must be said without evasion: **one must not be ready to die**. It is no virtue to let oneself be exterminated. It is no proof of spirituality to offer one's throat. It is no fidelity to the Ancestors to let go out what they carried for centuries. The day men come to do away with us — because they want our land, because they hold that their god gave it to them, because their belief makes it a moral duty to wage war on us, or simply because they are the better armed — on that day the Kamite people must be able to gather and to defend itself.

I say: to gather and to defend itself. To gather first, for that is our historic weakness: we have always been more numerous than those who struck us, and always more scattered than they. To defend itself next, which presupposes knowing in advance who warns whom, who shelters whom, who takes the lead and for how long. A free federation can do this without an emperor: it does it by convention, by practice and by habit — as a village without walls has known for centuries where the women and children go when the dust rises on the horizon.

Let me be clearly understood, and let nothing that follows be twisted. We preach no war, we bear no people ill will, and we shall never raise a hand against a man for what he believes. What I write in this second part is a right, not a programme: the right to exist, and the duty, for the man who answers for a people, not to hand it over out of naivety. The seven chapters that follow say what history has taught us, what threatens us today, what we shall do — and above all what we shall never do.

II. The first fault: the sovereign who forbids his people to fight

The history of humanity has engraved this fault several times, and always in the same ink.

On November 16, 1532, in the square of Cajamarca, a sovereign who reigned over millions of men and commanded an army of tens of thousands went out to meet one hundred and sixty-eight strangers. He came in procession, in ceremonial dress, his men carrying parade weapons, because he could not conceive that a handful of unknown men might be a danger. Within hours he was a prisoner, his escort massacred, and an empire of several million souls had passed into the hands of a few hundred men. A few years earlier, in 1519, another sovereign, on the other side of the American continent, had received strangers in his capital, lodged them, fed them, honoured them, and held back his own men who wanted to fight them. His city was destroyed and his people decimated.

I do not tell these two stories in order to judge men dead five centuries ago, nor to flatter those who enjoy easy lessons. I tell them because the error is visible to the naked eye, and because it is a chief's error: these sovereigns knew invaders had come, and they forbade their own to fight. They did so from calculation, from courtesy, from curiosity, from certainty of their own power — the motive hardly matters. The result is the same, and there is no second chance: a whole people paid for the politeness of its chief.

That is why I write this into our doctrine, and I want to be reminded of it should I weaken: **never again the story of the con-**

quistadors. No BAZURU, no council, no elder may order the Kamites not to defend themselves when men come to exterminate them. Such an instruction would be void. And the holder who gave it would disqualify himself, exactly as one who attempted to reign: in both cases he would have betrayed the office.

We have our own version of this lesson, and it is gentler, because our elders knew what had to be done. Four times in a thousand years the blade came, and four times our houses gave battle, then chose the road rather than denial. To withdraw is not to submit: it is, having fought, to refuse to be killed to the last man for a position that can no longer be held, and to remain able to refuse conversion. But it also happened that our fathers did not withdraw. In 1915 and 1916, between the Bani and the Volta, the villages rose against the colonial empire in the largest armed insurrection French West Africa ever knew; they were crushed by cannon and machine guns, and my country still bears the mark. They were wrong by calculation and right by honour. Between withdrawal after battle and battle to the end, our elders always chose according to the situation, never according to a principle forbidding them one of the two. That is the liberty I speak of.

III. The second fault: the display that summons the predator

The first fault delivers a people through excess of confidence. The second delivers it through excess of brilliance, and that one is ours.

In 1324 an emperor of Mali crossed the known world distributing gold by the handful. He took thousands of men and camels loaded

with metal, and he gave so much alms in Cairo that the price of gold there stayed depressed for years — the Arab chroniclers recorded it, and they can still be read. Fifty years later an atlas drawn in Majorca and offered to a king of Europe showed, in the middle of the Sahara, a Black sovereign holding a nugget in his hand. That drawing did Africa more harm than many armies: it put on a map, for all who could read, the address of a rich and distant man. They came looking for the gold. They did not find it where the map showed it. And they took what they found: men.

I have written elsewhere the lesson our houses drew from this about power, and why the title of KING BAZURU is not inherited. Here I draw the lesson of defence, which is a different one and just as hard: **one does not display what one cannot guard**. Neither one's gold, nor one's reserves, nor one's secrets, nor the exact number of one's men. A people that spreads out its riches without the means to defend them is not conducting diplomacy: it is advertising for predators.

This is no call to poverty or to self-effacement. We are proud of what we have, and this entire declaration proclaims it. But there is a way of proclaiming that protects and a way that exposes. The first says what we are and what we can do; the second counts, exhibits, promises and attracts. I want **no second Mansa Musa, and nothing extravagant**: no spectacular coronation, no treasure on show, no display of strength, no gaudy title sold to the cameras. The discretion I spoke of in the first part has no other foundation than this — it is a measure of safety, chosen for the circumstances of the moment, and not a taste for mystery.

There is a modern version of this fault, and our young commit it daily without knowing: to recount online what one owns, where one sleeps, what one is preparing, who is with one. Today's predators no longer read atlases: they read our posts, and machines read them on their behalf, faster than we do. What the Catalan Atlas did to Africa in fifty years, a telephone does to a family in one evening.

IV. What threatens us, and it has names

Let us now speak of the real, without dramatising and without reassuring ourselves. Four dangers weigh upon the Kamite peoples, and none is imaginary: each has occurred, each has victims who can be counted, each has dates.

The first is extermination. The word is heavy; it is nonetheless exact, and it concerns Africans. Between 1904 and 1908, in the south-west of the continent, a European empire undertook the annihilation of the Herero and the Nama: a written extermination order, deportation into the desert, camps; the state responsible acknowledged it as genocide only in 2021, more than a century later. In 1994, in Rwanda, a million people were killed in a hundred days while the world watched. In 2003 and again today, Darfur. Nobody, then, can tell us that the extermination of an African people is a hypothetical exercise.

The second is conquest in the name of a god – land claimed because a divinity is said to have given it, or because those who live there are not held to be true men. This is no caricature: in 1452 and 1455, papal bulls authorised a Christian king to subdue and reduce to perpetual servitude the "Saracens, pagans and other enemies of

Christ", and to seize their goods and their kingdoms. From that text was born the so-called doctrine of discovery, which served for five centuries as legal title for dispossession, until the Vatican formally repudiated it in March 2023. Five centuries to disavow a sentence. We have the right to remember how long such things take.

The third is the moral duty of holy war, that is, the sincere belief, among men who pray, that they are bound to convert or subdue their neighbour. I have devoted an entire writing to this question and shall not return to it here, except to say this: the danger is not a man's faith, it is the obligation a doctrine lays on him to dispose of mine.

The fourth is internal, and it is the least spoken of. Among us children are accused of witchcraft, driven out, beaten, burned, "exorcised" until they die — United Nations agencies have documented the phenomenon for twenty years in several of our countries. People with albinism are mutilated and killed for fetishes. Old men and women are lynched on denunciation. This is often done against our traditions, sometimes in their name, and almost always in poverty and ignorance. A people that claims to defend its own against the foreigner while letting this happen at home has understood nothing about defence. The Bwa Sacré says it plainly: none of our houses permits a child, a sick person or an elder to be treated so, and he who does it is not a guardian of tradition, he is a criminal.

V. The fourth jihad: we know what it is

There is one field in which nobody will teach us anything, and it is this one. We did not read conquest in books: we underwent it four times.

The first in the eleventh century, when the blade came down from the desert upon old Ghana and whole peoples left the Sahel rather than convert. The second in the century of Sundiata, halted not by a weapon but by a pact. The third in the nineteenth, in the disorder of empires and of the coloniser, when conquering states installed holy war at the heart of our countries. The fourth today, from the fall of northern Mali to the attacks of Grand-Bassam and Kafolo, a few hours' drive from here. The same movement, the same target, the same promise: convert or leave.

What that experience taught us can be put in a few lines, and it is worth more than many treatises of strategy. First, an enemy of this kind does not negotiate what founds him: one may deal with him over goats, never over conversion. Second, he advances where the state is absent and where the young have nothing: so schools, work and justice are the first weapons, before the rifle. Third, he recruits first among our own: the first victims of these movements are the populations from which they claim to draw their fighters, and we shall never confuse a people with the katiba that bleeds it. Fourth, he uses distant causes to give himself a face: I have said elsewhere what to think of foreign images that serve as a preacher's way into our villages.

And fifth — the most important: we survived four of these waves without ever denying the Ancestors, and without ever becoming in

our turn a power of conversion. That is no small thing. Many peoples have travelled the opposite road: attacked in the name of a god, they ended by attacking in the name of theirs. We fought, we withdrew in good order, we rebuilt, and we never exported our faith by force, because we have nothing to export. That is our moral strength, and it is worth defending along with the rest.

VI. How a free people defends itself

There remains the question that will be put to me: how does a federation without a central power, without an army, without a capital and without a budget defend itself? I answer with what our houses have known how to do for a thousand years, and with what our century adds to it.

First, the alarm. A village without walls is not a village without watchmen. Our elders kept watch in the trees and knew, before anyone else, when the dust rose in the north; the federation must reconstitute this in a modern form: to know what is happening among our own, everywhere, and to know it fast. An informed people has already won half its security.

Then, shelter and the road. Our fathers were not defeated four times: four times they gave battle, refused the choice imposed on them, and left in good order with the essential — the Ancestors, the language, the seed. Withdrawal after battle is a manoeuvre, not a disgrace: we never left a land without having given battle. But it must be prepared, or it becomes a rout. Knowing where the women and children go, who guards the elders, what is taken and what is left: that is organised in cold blood, never on the night of the attack.

Then, alliance. Here the federation takes on its full meaning. A single house is prey; twelve forewarned houses are a problem. We need no unified command for that — our ancestors had none — we need conventions known in advance: who warns whom, who receives whose displaced, who speaks for all when speech must be quick.

Then, legitimacy. A people that defends itself must be able to tell the world what is happening to it, with proof, in a language institutions understand. That is why the register, the dating, the sealed and timestamped acts are no engineer's vanity: the day a land, a filiation or a fact is disputed, prior proof will be worth more than ten late testimonies. Law is a weapon for the man who has prepared his file, and a ruin for the man who arrives empty-handed.

Finally, force, and let us say things as they are. States exist, they have armies, and the armed defence of our countries belongs to them: we create no militia, we arm no one, and we call on Kamites to serve the law of their country loyally. What the federation institutes is the duty not to be taken by surprise, the duty to gather, and the absolute refusal of any order forbidding a man to protect his family. Where self-defence groups have arisen in our regions, we have seen what happens when they escape all rule: revenge on civilians, scores settled between neighbours, and in the end easier recruiting for the enemy. To defend oneself without becoming what one fights is the only victory that counts.

VII. What we shall never do

A doctrine of defence that did not state its limits would be a doctrine of war. Here are ours, and they admit no exception.

We shall conquer no land. The Bwa Sacré claims nobody's territory, and none of our texts founds a right to a soil in the name of a god or of priority in time. We know too well what that idea has cost the world.

We shall convert no one, by force or otherwise. This is already written in the first part and it holds in time of war as well: there is no circumstance in which the Bwa Sacré would impose its spirituality on anyone.

We shall never wage holy war. We shall bless no weapon, promise no paradise to a fighter, and never say that a man killed in combat is rewarded in the invisible. It is precisely that mechanism which has been killing our children for a thousand years; we shall not reproduce it by turning it round.

We shall never strike civilians, nor places of worship, nor schools, nor markets, and we shall never take revenge on a guilty man's family. Whoever did so in our name would be publicly disavowed and handed over to the justice of his country.

We shall never confuse a doctrine with a people, nor an armed movement with the community it claims to come from. This rule is written in all my texts and it is here the most important of all: the day we begin to speak of men by their ethnicity or their religion, we shall have lost, whatever the fortune of arms.

We shall not use defence as a pretext for installing a central power. It is the oldest trick in the world: the danger justifies the chief, the chief settles in, and the danger never ends. Every security measure taken by the federation shall be limited in time, publicly stated, and surrendered when its cause is spent.

VIII. The weapons of this century

I end with the most useful, for a chapter on defence that spoke only of rifles would be a chapter of the last century.

The first weapon is a number that knows itself. We are hundreds of millions, on the continent and in the diaspora, and we do not know one another. A register, deposited lineages, a way of recognising one another from one continent to the next — that is what turns a dust of houses into a people able to gather. Nothing protects better than being visibly numerous and manifestly organised.

The second is proof. What is dated, sealed and verifiable cannot be contested: neither a land, nor a filiation, nor a fact. The peoples who lost their lands in the twentieth century almost always lost them before a register kept by someone else.

The third is language. A people that speaks its own language possesses a channel the adversary does not read, a memory he cannot rewrite, and a youth he cannot turn so easily. I issued the call for that; I repeat it here as a measure of security, and not only of culture.

The fourth is artificial intelligence, and I weigh my words. It is already being used against us: to manufacture emotion, to steer our young, to produce images that never existed. He who does not learn

it will suffer it. The federation must know how to use it to document, to verify, to warn, to translate — never to sign, never to decide in our place, never to bear the seal.

The fifth is alliance with those who are not ours. We have no interest in being alone. States, churches, universities, international institutions and men of goodwill share our view on one point or another; we shall work with them on that point, without selling them our position as a whole, as I wrote in the declaration of the preceding day.

And the sixth, which holds all the others: the word kept. A people whose word is worth something gains allies without paying for them, mediations without begging for them, and the respect of its adversaries. It is our old currency, it has never been devalued, and it kept us standing when we had neither walls, nor army, nor gold.

What this declaration institutes

So that this should depend neither on a mood nor on one man, I fix in twelve points what the federation is, what it is not, and what it defends, valid until the sages, assembled and voting, decide otherwise.

First point. Kamitism is not a religion. It is a federation of spiritualities, without prophet, without revealed book, without clergy, without paradise or hell, without conversion and without mission.

Second point. What the federation holds in common is threefold and is nothing else: nature, the ancestors, tolerance.

Third point. Kamite liberty is instituted. There is no central power in the federation: no house waits for an order from a centre, and the BAZURU who attempted to reign would, by that fact alone, be disqualified. The common order is limited to a calendar: each does as he wishes, but in such a season.

Fourth point. The federation in no case touches the spirituality of its houses. Rites, names, prohibitions, calendars, invisible beings and accounts of origin belong to each house, and to it alone.

Fifth point. Tolerance is maximal. Ours is he who believes in no god, he who believes in one God, he who acknowledges several. Marriage to a spouse of another confession raises no difficulty. There exists among us neither apostasy nor excommunication.

Sixth point. The diversity of our spiritualities is sacred. It is not a disorder to be corrected but our strength: none shall unify it, neither from without, nor from within, nor in the name of efficiency.

Seventh point. Kamite is he who descends from the cradle and who chooses to conduct himself properly towards his Ancestors — on the continent as in the diaspora, with no condition of papers, of village or of language.

Eighth point. We must conserve and make evolve: record the languages and the knowledge of the public heritage, document them scientifically, and set them to work — keeping out of reach what belongs to the sacred.

Ninth point. Liberty is not disarmament. The Kamite people must be able to gather and defend itself when its extermination is undertaken, when its land is claimed in the name of a god, or when

a belief is imposed on it by war. No one has standing to forbid it to defend itself: such an instruction would be void, and its author disqualified.

Tenth point. Defence is defensive. The Bwa Sacré conquers no land, converts no one, declares no holy war, blesses no weapon, promises no fighter any reward in the invisible, and never strikes civilians, schools, markets or places of worship. A doctrine is not a people; an armed movement is not the community it claims to come from.

Eleventh point. Security founds no central power. Every measure taken for defence is public, limited in time, and ends with its cause. The federation raises neither militia nor army; armed defence belongs to states, and Kamites serve the law of their country loyally.

Twelfth point. One does not display what one cannot guard. Neither gold, nor reserves, nor secrets, nor numbers: discretion is a measure of safety, revisable, and not a taste for mystery.

Closing

We are not a religion. Neither are we the absence of religion. We are an ancient and perfectly organised way of inhabiting the world, which holds to three things: the earth beneath our feet, the dead behind us, and peace with the neighbour who does not think as we do. The rest — the names, the rites, the powers, the masks, the languages — is our wealth, and it must remain diverse.

To the Kamites I say: stop sitting the examination. When you are asked for your prophet and your book, do not lower your eyes and do not search for an equivalent. Answer with what you have: a

wood, a lineage, a tolerance few peoples have managed to keep, two thousand languages, and two hundred and fifty-six signs our elders were already reading as machines read today. Then ask, in your turn, your own questions.

To the others — believers of every confession, scholars, the curious — I say: you have nothing to fear from us. We wish to convert no one, and that is the first thing to understand; the second is that we have something to teach you, and that it will belong to you as well.

I want to end with an image that every Kamite will understand. In our villages the sacred forest has no gate, no armed guard, no wall. One simply knows where it begins. Nobody enters it absent-mindedly, and he who enters it without right will not be punished by a militia: he will be taken up by what he has disturbed. That is how our whole edifice stands — not by constraint, but by the shared knowledge of where what matters begins. A federation of spiritualities is a country of that kind: vast, open, without walls, and perfectly bounded for whoever can see.

That, too, is why we have survived everything that has passed over us. Our villages were burnt, we were reduced several times to the age of stone, our masks were carried off, our ceremonies were forbidden, what we knew was called superstition. We had no army, no clergy, no book to defend; we had a land, our dead and peace with the neighbour. That proved harder to destroy than cathedrals. We are still here, and we are speaking.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré

BAZURU

Abidjan, September 17, 2026

– Chapter X –

The Kamites Before the Revealed Religions

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré on the place of the Kamites among the revealed religions – in the diaspora, in Muslim-majority countries, in Christian-majority countries –, on the daily demonisation they suffer there, on what they keep and on what they offer

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition – original French edition:
Les Kamites face aux religions révélées

Preliminary note

There are subjects on which the President of the Kamites must speak because they are not theoretical: they happen every day, in a family, in a schoolyard, in a church, on a screen. This is one of them. A Kamite who holds to his ancestors is today presented as a dangerous man: a sorcerer to some, an idolater to others, a backward creature to the rest. This is said to him in his own country, in the country of his exile, and by his own brothers. In the end he believes it, and that is the worst of it.

The subject of this declaration is therefore not a quarrel: it is a situation. For centuries the Kamites have lived in contact with the revealed religions — those which hold that a word came down once, to one man, and is valid for all. This declaration describes that contact as it stands today, in the three worlds where our houses live: the diaspora, Muslim-majority countries, Christian-majority countries. I already treated part of the question in June, in the tribune "The Devil Always Wears Our Face", which dealt with our own cinemas; I shall not do it again. Here I take the whole: what the revealed religions have brought us, what they cost us, how the figure of the devil we are given is manufactured, what we keep, and what we offer them.

Three precautions, which I ask to be reread before anyone attributes to me what I do not write. This declaration targets neither Islam, nor Christianity, nor any believer: it targets a practice — demonisation — and those who live by it. It does not return evil for evil: we shall never say of another spirituality what is said of ours. And it does not spare our own: part of what is done among us, in

the name of our traditions, is indefensible, and I write it here as I have written it elsewhere. The references are at the end of the volume: nothing that follows asks to be believed on trust.

PART ONE

The three worlds

What a revealed religion is, and what a Kamite endures in three different ways: in the diaspora, in Muslim-majority countries, in Christian-majority countries

I. Opening: a concrete problem

Let us begin with the concrete, since it is the concrete that hurts. A man in Abidjan pours water before the door of his father's house and his neighbour tells him he is calling on Satan. A woman in Bamako goes to offer a chicken to her ancestors and her brother-in-law calls her *kafir*. A mother in Kinshasa lets a pastor name her own son a witch. A student in Paris does not dare say that he keeps an altar at home, because he knows how his hands will be looked at. A child in Lagos watches, one Sunday evening, a film in which the old man of the village cuts children's throats under a mask, and learns, at six years old, that what his grandfather did is a crime.

None of these five facts is an event. They are ordinary Wednesdays, and that is what distinguishes our problem from everything I have written about so far. Jihad kills in waves; demonisation works every day, without noise, and obtains without a weapon what the blade did not obtain in a thousand years: that the Kamite should deny himself, of his own accord, believing he is doing good.

The scale must be measured. We are demonised everywhere, but not in the same way, and that is why our young do not know how to answer: they receive three different attacks which they take for one. In the diaspora we are called backward, charlatans, sectarians. In Muslim-majority countries we are called associators, idolaters, pagans to be brought in or set aside. In Christian-majority countries we are called possessed, witches, people to be delivered. Three vocabularies, three institutions, three manners: the same man at the centre, and the same result — that he should be ashamed.

And there is worse than being attacked by strangers: between the hunts for child witches in Nigeria and the jihadists of Mali, the Kamite finds himself in hell with his own brothers. It is Africans who film our rites as hell, Africans who preach deliverance at three hundred thousand francs, Africans who burn mausoleums, Africans who drive an old woman out of her village. That is the summit of self-denial, and it is what we must come out of.

A declaration will not settle this. But nothing is settled before it is named, and nobody until now has named it from our place.

II. What a revealed religion is

Before describing the contact, we must describe what stands facing us, and describe it exactly, without irony and without fear. I use the word these religions use of themselves: revealed.

A revealed religion holds that a word came down, once, in one place, to one man, and that this word is valid for the whole of humanity. From that proposition everything else follows with impeccable logic. There is a text, since the word must be preserved intact. There is a prophet, since it came through someone. There is a clergy or a body of scholars, since it must be interpreted without corruption. There is a clear boundary between those who have received it and those who have not. And there is a mission, since, if this word is valid for all, keeping it to oneself would be a fault. Three of these religions were born in the same region of the world, claim the same ancestor, and today cover more than half of humanity.

We are none of this, and I have established it elsewhere: no revelation, no single book, no clergy, no boundary, no mission. Hence an asymmetry that must be faced, for it explains everything that follows: contact between a revealed religion and a federation of spiritualities is not an exchange between two neighbours who resemble one another. They have, by construction, a duty towards us; we have, by construction, no duty towards them. They must bring us the word; we have nothing to bring them. That is why the encounter is always one-way, even when it is courteous.

Let us add what a revealed religion cannot do without denying itself: acknowledge that another road leads to the same place. It can

respect, tolerate, converse, protect — many have done so and do so — but it cannot say that our dead and its God are of equal worth, for that would abandon what founds it. We must therefore stop expecting from it a thing it cannot give, and ask of it instead what it can perfectly well give: that it not insult us, that it not accuse our children, that it not burn our houses.

Finally, and this is essential for what follows: the majority of Kamites today belong to one of these religions. We are therefore not speaking of an external adversary, but of the house next door, which is often our own. The question is not to win against them: it is to know on what conditions we live together, and what we refuse to pay for that peace.

III. In the diaspora: the charlatan and the backward man

Take the diaspora first, and France as an example, because that is the one our families know best.

There the Kamite meets a demonisation that never says its name, because it presents itself as reason. What he does is not called evil: it is called false. He is not told that he worships a demon; he is told that he believes in stories. His sacrifice becomes a "practice", his elder becomes a "traditional healer", his spirituality becomes a "belief" — the word reserved for what need not be taken seriously. And the word that sums it all up is this one: *marabout*, which in the street has become a synonym for swindler, on the little cards stuck to bus shelters. Millions of people know nothing of our spiritualities but those cards.

To this polite invisibility is added an administrative suspicion. What does not fit the known categories — an assembly that is neither church, nor mosque, nor synagogue; a sacred place that is a tree; an authority that does not show itself — becomes an object of vigilance. Our gatherings are sooner regarded as aberrations than as a religion, because the definition of religion was written by others, with their own forms: a founder, a book, a clergy. I have demonstrated it elsewhere; here I note what it costs in practice.

Then comes the pressure of one's own. In African families in France, it is not French people who forbid a mother to prepare a libation: it is her converted children, or her pastor, or her imam, all of them African too. Exile has this peculiarity, that it tightens the community around the institutions which frame it — the church, the mosque — and that whoever has neither finds himself alone, in a country that does not understand him and within a diaspora that judges him.

The result is an entire generation performing its rites in secret. Grown men — engineers, doctors, teachers — closing the curtains to speak to their dead. A transmission cut, not by force but by shame. And a consequence few see: those children, deprived of a spirituality that belonged to them, do not thereby become serene citizens — many go looking elsewhere, sometimes very far, for a replacement identity that will know how to name them.

IV. In Muslim-majority countries

The second world is the one where our houses live alongside Islam, from Senegal to Chad, and where the pressure takes another form: not derision, but religious disqualification.

The vocabulary there is precise, and it has consequences. What we do is classed as *shirk*, association: the fault which, in that doctrine, is not forgiven. Our consulted dead become forbidden intermediaries; our objects become idols; our elders become *kuffar*. In ordinary life this often remains peaceful: people greet one another, trade, even marry, and millions of West African Muslims go on respecting the usages of their grandmothers. But the qualification is there, available, and one preacher suffices to activate it.

When it is activated, it does not stop at words. In 2012, in northern Mali, men destroyed with pickaxes the mausoleums of Timbuktu, inscribed on the heritage of humanity, because they judged the veneration of saints idolatrous; one of them was convicted for it by the International Criminal Court in 2016, and it was the first time an international court convicted a man for that crime alone: having destroyed a heritage. In those same years mask dances were forbidden in the areas held, sacred woods profaned, custodians of shrines threatened with death, drums banned. What the blade wants to destroy among us is not only lives: it is memory, because a people without memory converts by itself in the following generation.

One thing must be added, which is capital and which I repeat in every writing: the ordinary Muslim is not that man, and the first victims of these movements are Muslims. I do not criticise the faith of a man at prayer; I criticise a doctrine that makes it a duty for

men to dispose of our dead. And I add something our young must know: the Islam of West Africa was long an Islam of cohabitation, which let the usages of the country live. What hardened it, over the last half-century, came from elsewhere, with money, scholarships and preachers trained far from here. It is not we who changed.

V. In Christian-majority countries

The third world is the one where our houses live alongside Christianity, and it is today the most violent for our children — not through the blade, but through deliverance.

The vocabulary there is different: what we do is not false, it is not merely forbidden — it is *demonic*. Our altars are doors opened to Satan, our ancestors are familiar spirits, our illnesses are attacks, our failures are generational curses to be broken. This frame has a formidable strength, because it explains everything: unemployment, infertility, the accident, the neighbour who prospers. And it gives the faithful an accessible enemy: his own grandmother.

To this frame is added an economy, and it must be described without evasion because our families bear it every month. In many assemblies the payment has become an obligation for which nobody accounts: a tenth of income, levied on people who have no income, and topped up with special offerings, seeds of faith, paid prayer nights, tickets to see the prophet. Women who sell in the market give a tenth of what they have not earned, while the man who preaches drives a vehicle none of his faithful will ever afford. That is no longer a community: it is a levy.

And because the levy pays, assemblies multiply. In our neighbourhoods there is now a church in every street, as there is a mosque at every crossroads in the countries next door: rented halls, tarpaulins, painted signs, loudspeakers answering one another. Each lives off an audience, and every new preacher must outdo the last: bigger miracles, more visible enemies, more numerous demons. It is that outbidding which explains why demonisation worsens instead of subsiding: it is the product of competition.

Some states have ended by reacting, and the fact must be cited because it is instructive. Rwanda closed several thousand places of worship from 2018, then thousands more in 2024, requiring conditions of safety and hygiene – and, for pastors, a degree in theology. One may debate the measure; one cannot debate what it reveals: an African state judged that there were more men preaching than men trained, and that worship had become a trade to be regulated. For our part we ask for the closure of no church; we simply ask that the money of the poor stop financing the demonisation of their own parents.

From this comes the gravest thing I must write in this declaration. In several of our countries children are accused of witchcraft, driven from the house, beaten, starved, burned, “delivered” until they die. This is no rumour: United Nations agencies have documented it for more than fifteen years, and in the single state of Akwa Ibom in Nigeria thousands of children have been accused and hundreds taken in by centres. The accusation almost never comes from an elder of the village: it comes from a preacher, often paid for the deliverance, and it was popularised by religious propaganda films shot on the spot, the most famous of which broadcast the image of the possessed child into millions of homes. Elsewhere it is

old women who are driven out: in Ghana they live by the hundred in camps, and in July 2023 Parliament passed a text criminalising such accusations — which was never assented to, so that to this day no law punishes them.

Let the reversal be measured. The word "witch" is not ours: it is the word the missionaries laid on our elders. Today it is Africans who use it against Africans, and the victims are the weakest of all — children, widows, old people with no defender. Our traditions never authorised this: a child is presented, not judged; an old woman is consulted, not driven out. He who burns a child in the name of tradition is no guardian: he is a criminal, and I wrote it in this morning's declaration as I write it here.

VI. What this does to a child

Now the price must be stated, for we speak of doctrines and forget that all of it settles in a child's head.

The Kamite child learns very early something nobody says to his face: what comes from him is suspect. At school, history begins elsewhere. At church or at the mosque, what his grandmother does is what one must turn away from. On television, the man who most resembles him — the old man in a wrapper, the one who speaks the village language — is the one who kills in the film. On his telephone, images of our rites are filed next to horror videos. Nobody needs to tell him: he concludes.

And what he concludes is twofold, which is what makes the harm so hard to undo. First: my family is on the side of evil. Then: to be on the side of good, I must move away from my own. The first day a

young man tells his mother he will not eat of the sacrifice, he believes he has gained something. He has lost his address.

That is self-denial, and that is its summit: a man defending himself against being what he is, laughing first at his own so as not to be ranked with them, learning by heart the faults imputed to his house. We all know men made that way: they are often the harshest, because it takes a great deal of noise to cover what one has left behind.

One last consequence, and it is political. A child with no spiritual house of his own does not remain without one: he takes one, and he takes it where he is spoken to with force. That is precisely what recruiters know — on one side as on the other. The shame we allow to settle in our children is our adversaries' first resource. That is why this question is not a question of culture: it is a question of security.

VII. What we have already lost

Before looking elsewhere, we must count what demonisation has already cost us, for we speak of insults and forget that these are real losses, measurable, and for the most part irreversible.

We have lost names. Whole lineages today bear first names from two foreign books, and the name that said the house, the day, the birth order or the circumstance has vanished in two generations. A name is not a label: it was information; in losing it, a family lost part of its archive.

We have lost funerals. In whole regions the hurried burial has replaced the ceremony that releases the soul, because families were persuaded that the latter was diabolical. The result is visible

everywhere: mournings that never end, houses where the dead man's name is no longer spoken, and people who go and pay dearly elsewhere for what their grandmother did for nothing.

We have lost forests. Every sacred wood was protected by a prohibition; the prohibition gone, the chainsaw came in. It must be said to the ecologists who explain nature to us: where our cults held, the trees still stand, and where they were demonised there is nothing left. The deforestation of our countries is not only economic, it is spiritual.

We have lost objects, by the hundreds of thousands, a part of which was handed over by converts. We have lost knowledge: the plants, the deliveries of children, the fractures, the reckonings of the sky, which nobody wrote down because they were "village things". We have lost words, and with them ways of thinking that none will recover. And we have lost people: the children driven out, the women of the camps, the lynched elders. And let this reckoning not be read as that of a people who let it happen: nothing was ever taken from us that was not taken after a battle.

Let me not be made to say what I do not say: none of this is the fault of ordinary believers, and part of these losses is due to migration, to school, to the city, to the wage. But demonisation supplied the moral authorisation: it turned an abandonment into a duty. That is what it does best — it makes virtuous what is only a loss.

VIII. In the Americas: Haiti, Bahia, Havana

A fourth place must be added to my three, because it is the laboratory of all the others: the Americas, where our spiritualities survived the slave trade and where for four centuries they have undergone a demonisation that has never once been interrupted.

What crossed the ocean in the holds was not only bodies: it was whole houses, with their names, their rhythms and their dead. The vodou of Haiti, the candomblé of Bahia, the santería of Cuba, the orisha cult of Trinidad are not colonial inventions: they are our houses, reconstituted from memory by people from whom everything had been taken, and hidden under the names of saints to pass beneath the master's gaze. It is one of the greatest spiritual feats in human history, and everywhere it is told as the superstition of slaves.

Demonisation there has its dates. Haiti, where vodou carried the only slave revolution to have founded a state, endured campaign after campaign: altars destroyed, oaths of renunciation imposed, priests hunted, until the middle of the twentieth century. And the whole world heard, the day after the earthquake of 2010, an American preacher explain on a national channel that this people was paying for a pact its ancestors had made with the devil. Tens of thousands dead under the rubble — the Haitian authorities counted more than three hundred thousand — and the first explanation offered to the public was that one.

In Brazil, where candomblé and umbanda are recognised by law, *terreiros* are attacked, burned, ransacked every year; elderly priestesses have been driven from their homes by gangs acting in the name of a

church. The statistics of religious intolerance there name, year after year, the religions of African origin as the first targets, although they account for a tiny share of the population. And in the English-speaking islands the word *obeah* long remained in penal codes inherited from slavery: to practise was an offence; some of those texts were repealed only in the twenty-first century, and a few are still on the books.

Why this chapter in a declaration written in Abidjan? For three reasons. Because those houses are ours and their dead are our dead. Because what happened to them shows what demonisation produces when it is let alone for four centuries: it ends by writing the laws. And because the diaspora of the Americas teaches us something we have not learned: it held on without a village, without land, without a language, by rhythm, by name and by obstinacy alone. If they held on to that, we, who still have the woods, have no excuse.

PART TWO

How a devil is made

The vocabulary, the screen, the pulpit, the blade, the telephone, the schoolbook, the shame of the educated — and the question nobody asks: who profits?

I. The vocabulary

The manufacture begins with words, and the words are not ours.

"Fetish" is a Portuguese word — *feitiço*, the contrivance, the charm — used by fifteenth-century sailors for what they saw on our coasts without understanding it. "Animism" is a nineteenth-century anthropologist's word, invented to rank peoples on a ladder whose top rung Europe occupied: it does not designate a religion, it designates a place — the lowest. "Witch" is the word that Europe, which had burned its own women, laid upon our elders. "Juju", "gris-gris", "marabout", "witch doctor" followed the same road, and all have in

common that they make ridiculous or alarming the thing they name.

What happens when a people accepts the vocabulary of those who describe it? It loses every argument in advance. If I call my altar a fetish, I have already conceded that it is a magical object; if I call my elder a witch doctor, I have already conceded that he manipulates forces instead of keeping a register; if I accept the word animism, I have already conceded that we are a stage and not a civilisation. The whole battle of demonisation is fought there, before the first argument.

That is why the Bwa Sacré names its ceremonies in its own language and refuses to translate them with words that lie. This is not affectation: it is taking back control of the description. Let it be said *teerobè*, *tchènirobè*, *bwan bèssi robè*, and let whoever wishes to understand learn the words, as he learned *karma*, *kosher*, *ramadan* and *nirvana* without ever asking for a translation.

One last word about a word: "religion". We are endlessly asked whether we are one. What we answer stands in another declaration of this day: we are a federation of spiritualities. But one must know that refusing the word has a legal price — in many countries, what is not recognised as a religion has no status, no protection, no days, no places. There demonisation finds its easiest ground: one does not destroy what does not legally exist.

II. The screen

I devoted a whole tribune to this question last June, and I take from it here only what serves the demonstration, referring the reader to that text.

Switch on a screen one evening in Abidjan, Lagos, Accra or Cotonou, and choose a local film. You know the plot before the credits: the custodian of the shrine poisons, the old man of the village demands a human sacrifice, the sacred hut is the antechamber of the devil, and salvation arrives with a Bible and a suit. These films are not shot by our enemies: they are written, acted, produced and bought by us. It is the most effective demonisation ever organised against us, because it wears our own faces and speaks our own languages.

One must understand why it works so well. Popular cinema needs a villain legible in three seconds; the pastor needs a visible enemy; the producer needs financing, and certain assemblies provide it. The meeting of those three needs produced an entire genre, and that genre has trained three generations of spectators. A child who has seen the mask associated with murder three hundred times will not be convinced by an argument: he has been educated by the image, which does not argue.

Worst of all is the directly religious film. In Nigeria, at the end of the nineteen-nineties, a woman preacher shot a feature film showing possessed children gathering at night to kill; the film circulated in millions of copies, and the social workers who today take in accused children in the delta cite it as a trigger of the

phenomenon. A fiction produced burned children. Let us no longer be told that images have no consequences.

And what is missing must be said: we have filmed almost nothing in reply. No film in which the old man who speaks to the ancestors is the one who saves the village; no series in which initiation is a school; no documentary in which the rite is filmed as one films a mass, with respect and without an ironic commentary. The ground is free, and we leave it free.

III. The pulpit

The third instrument is the weekly word, and it is the one whose power we measure worst, because it leaves no written trace.

Every week, in tens of thousands of halls, men explain to Africans that their misfortunes come from their lineage. The watchword is known: break with the ancestors' covenants. This is no figure of speech: people are told to burn family objects, to renounce names, to pour no more water, to stay away from funerals, sometimes to stop speaking to an uncle. The deliverance session stages the enemy just designated, and the faithful leave relieved, having confessed, wept and paid.

In other halls, other men explain that those same usages are the gravest association, and that a believer must keep clear of them. The tone is colder, the consequence identical: the house splits in two, and it is always the same side that is abandoned.

I want to be exact and not put everyone in one bag, for there is an injustice to avoid here. Many priests, pastors and imams of Africa have never done this: some protect accused children, others celeb-

rate funerals with respect for the usages of the country, others write against these practices. I criticise those who demonise, not those who preach. And I note, because it matters for what follows, that those who protect are almost always the most rooted in the country, while those who demonise are often the most recent and the most dependent on distant funding.

IV. The blade

When demonisation stops being a discourse it becomes a policy of destruction, and we have the recent demonstration of it on our own continent.

Destroying mausoleums, forbidding dances, burning masks, felling a sacred wood, levelling a cemetery: these are not collateral damage, they are objectives. He who does it knows exactly what he is doing: he does not kill a man, he kills a transmission. The heritage destroyed in Timbuktu in 2012 had stood six centuries; a few days of pickaxes sufficed. And international justice, by judging this a war crime in 2016, recognised something our elders knew: that one can murder a people without killing a single person.

The same logic worked in the past, and it must be said without rancour but without amnesia: the missions of Europe organised, for decades, public burnings of sacred objects, at which converts were asked to bring themselves what their fathers had kept. Part of what we now look for in the museums of the North was not stolen: it was handed over by our own, who believed they were doing right. That is how demonisation works once it has succeeded: it no longer needs an executioner, it has willing collaborators.

Note finally the difference between the three worlds, for it clarifies the strategy to hold. In the diaspora we are erased; in Christian-majority countries we are exorcised; in the zones held by the blade we are suppressed. Three intensities, one direction, and one remedy: to exist in writing, in numbers, and under our own vocabulary.

V. The telephone

The fifth instrument is the most recent and the fastest, and it is the one our young hold in their hand.

A thirty-second video now suffices to condemn a man in his neighbourhood: an image taken at night, a drum, a caption asserting that this is a human sacrifice, and the thing is done. The networks reward indignation: the more an image frightens, the more it circulates, and the more it earns for whoever posted it. Our rites, filmed out of context, are a perfect material for that economy.

To this has lately been added pure fabrication. Videos circulate of ceremonies that never took place, produced by machines from a few words; voices of elders reconstituted; footage from other countries and other periods passed off as local. Our young have no means of sorting, and nobody has taught them. I wrote it a few days ago about foreign wars; I say it again here about our own affairs: a people whose image is manufactured by others is not a sovereign people.

And this fabrication has a concrete, immediate, physical consequence: an accusation online brings a crowd to a door. Women have been killed over a video. That is why the Bwa Sacré holds that

verification is a spiritual duty: whoever shares a witchcraft accusation without verifying takes part in what follows.

VI. The school and the textbook

There is an instrument slower than the others and deeper: the school textbook, which almost never demonises, but erases, which comes to the same thing.

Open the history textbook of a West African child. He will learn the empires, a few kings, the slave trade, colonisation, independence. He will learn almost nothing of what his great-grandparents thought of the world: not how a child is named, not why burial is separated from the funeral, not what a sacred wood is, not what the signs on a mask say. What is not on the syllabus does not exist; and what exists without being on the syllabus becomes, in a child's head, what one does not speak of at school — that is, what one is ashamed of.

When our spiritualities do appear, it is almost always in the wrong box: in the chapter on "traditional beliefs", in one page, in the past tense, between two illustrations, in the vocabulary whose origin I have shown. Never in the chapter on philosophy, never in the chapter on law — although our palavers are a judicial procedure —, never in mathematics, although base-twenty numeration and the two hundred and fifty-six signs of Ifá would have their place there.

Add what the child learns beside the textbook: in many of our schools religious instruction is confessional and entrusted to institutions that hold a position about us. The same child therefore receives, in the same building, erasure by the syllabus and condem-

nation by the chaplaincy. Nobody in that building will ever tell him that his own people thought.

This is repairable, and it costs almost nothing: a few pages in a textbook, a few hours in a year, and authors who know what they are talking about. We offer ourselves to write those pages, free of charge, and to submit them to whoever wishes to correct them. A people that does not enter the school syllabus of its own country will have to fight in every generation to exist; a people that enters it will not have to fight at all.

VII. The shame of the educated

There remains one instrument of which I must speak, and it is the one that costs me most, because it does not come from outside: it comes from our own higher schools.

A part of our educated class has made distance from the usages of the country the sign of its success. It shows in small things: the embarrassed smile when an uncle speaks of the ancestors; the way of saying “those stories”; the executive who calls himself modern and quietly sends a brother to consult in his stead. This contempt is often drier than the foreigner’s, because it wants to prove something.

It rests on a confusion which my training as an engineer entitles me to settle: people think modernity consists in replacing, when it consists in documenting. A man who studies his grandmother’s pharmacopoeia and publishes it is more modern than one who finds it shameful. A man who puts the proverbs of his village into a database is doing more contemporary work than one who speaks

only the language of the diploma. There is no contradiction between rigour and inheritance: the contradiction is between rigour and shame.

I add an observation that thirty years of practice have given me. The same elites who despise our usages in public practise them in private, nearly all of them, at the great tests: a marriage, a death, an illness, an election. That double life is the true face of self-denial, and it has a cost: a people whose learned men do not defend the house has nobody to write its books, plead its cases and correct its textbooks. That is why we have been so badly told — not because our enemies were strong, but because our scholars were elsewhere.

I ask no Kamite graduate to believe anything. I ask him one thing only, which belongs to his discipline and not to his faith: that he stop treating with contempt an object he has not studied.

VIII. Who profits?

Here is the question nobody asks, and with which this part must end, for it explains why the phenomenon does not stop of itself.

Deliverance is an industry. It has its tariffs — the session, the night of prayer, the oil, the prophet's travel —, its halls, its television channels, its stars, its vehicles. A man who lives by deliverance needs demons: if there are none left, he has no trade. He will therefore produce as many as are needed, and he will find them where it is easiest: in the believer's family, at the grandmother's, in the child who stammers, in the mother-in-law nobody likes.

The cinema of fear is an industry, with its budgets and its takings. Religious propaganda is funded, and one must have the courage to

say that the sums feeding the harshest preaching among us, on both sides, do not come from our villages. And the witchcraft accusation itself is often a money matter: a widow is accused the year her field is coveted, a child the year the house has one mouth too many. The researchers who have studied the camps of accused women say it: behind the supernatural there is almost always an inheritance.

So long as we describe demonisation as a spiritual misunderstanding we shall mistake the remedy. It is a market, with sellers, buyers and victims. One does not argue with a market: one opposes to it an offer, a law and a proof. That is the object of the third part.

PART THREE

What we answer

What we shall not do, what we owe them, what we ask of churches, mosques, states and filmmakers, why the Kamite is the natural mediator — and ten answers to learn

I. What we shall not do

Before saying what we do, the doors by which we are expected must be closed, for the easiest answer would be the worst.

We shall not return demonisation for demonisation. We shall never say that Christianity is a curse, nor that Islam is a possession, nor that a believer is possessed. That would be to adopt the weapon of the one who strikes us, and the first rule of all my writings forbids it: we criticise doctrines and practices, never the faith of a man at prayer.

Nor shall we ask for pity. The Kamite is not a professional victim, and a house that presents itself to the world by its wounds obtains compassion, never respect. We do not claim a place by title of suffering: we take it by title of what we have.

We shall not police consciences among our own. A Kamite who chooses the church or the mosque remains one of ours: there is among us neither apostasy nor excommunication, and I have instituted it in writing. A Kamite who prays elsewhere is no traitor; he who demonises his own house, on the other hand, is mistaken, and we shall tell him so with facts.

Finally, we shall not demand the disappearance of what troubles us. We ask for the banning of no film, no sermon and no book. We ask something harder and juster: the same rule for all, the right of reply, and the protection of children. What we want is not the silence of others: it is our own voice, on equal terms.

II. What we say to the Kamites

The first answer is an inward one, because no law will cure shame.

To the Kamites I say first: stop apologising. You do not have to begin your sentences with “I am not a sorcerer, but…”. He who defends himself against an accusation not yet made has already accepted it. You speak to your dead; others speak to a book; nobody has to apologise for the way he honours what made him.

I say next: learn your own affairs. One does not defend what one does not know. Many of ours, put in difficulty by a simple question, give way not from conviction but from ignorance: they can neither name our ceremonies, nor explain why there is no conversion

among us, nor say what the thing called animism is worth. Our writings exist for that; they are dated, sourced, and made to be produced in argument.

I also say: refuse the vocabulary. Do not say fetish; say what it is. Do not say witch doctor; say guardian, elder, initiate. And above all do not say what I hear in our own families — "the village things" — pronounced with the grimace of a man apologising. They are the affairs of your house, and they have a name.

Finally I say, and this is the hardest: sweep before your own door. Whoever among us accuses a child, drives out an old woman, sells a mask that has danced for a dead man, or takes a family's money promising a spell — that man does our house more harm than all the films in the world. We shall not cover him in the name of solidarity. One does not defend a tradition by protecting those who dishonour it.

III. What we owe them, and what we do not

A declaration that stated only the harm would be a pamphlet. I must therefore write what the revealed religions have brought us, and say it without wincing, for we keep no ledger of grievances.

They brought the school, and many of us — myself included — learned to read with them. They brought dispensaries and maternity wards where the state did not go, and stayed when everyone else left. They brought the writing of our languages: the first grammars, the first dictionaries of bwamu, of Dioula, of Bambara were made for the most part by missionaries who wanted to translate their book, and they are for us today irreplaceable documents.

They brought millions of Kamites real consolation, a discipline, a brotherhood, and upright lives. There are among them, among us, men and women who do good every day asking nothing, and this declaration does not target them.

And they brought us something else, without meaning to: they obliged us to define ourselves. A people never questioned does not know what it thinks. All the questions put to us to embarrass us — where is your book, who is your prophet, what becomes of the soul — forced us to formulate what our elders held without saying. Part of this corpus exists because we were summoned to answer.

That said, there is what we do not owe them, and the list is short. We do not owe them the renunciation of our dead. We do not owe them acceptance that our grandmother be called a demon. We do not owe them the accusation of a child. We do not owe them our disappearance from censuses, syllabuses and laws. And we do not owe them gratitude as the price of silence: what was given was given, what was taken was taken, and the one does not pay for the other.

The Kamite rule here is that of the palaver: one states what was done well, one states what was broken, and one looks for what must be laid down to close it. What we ask in the next chapter is exactly that: not a reparation of the past, but what must be laid down today for the common house to hold.

IV. What we ask of the churches and the mosques

We now address those who, among us, have the word every week, and we do so without hostility, because many of them are our brothers, our cousins and our friends.

We ask three things, and they are modest. The first: that it cease to be taught that our ancestors are demons. One can perfectly well preach one's faith without telling a child that his grandmother is a door of evil; generations of priests and imams did so before the arrival of imported preaching. The second: that no accusation of witchcraft against a child, a woman or an old person ever be pronounced in a place of worship, and that whoever pronounces it be disavowed by his own institution. The third: that deliverance not be a trade — that there be no tariff for driving out a demon one has just named.

We offer in exchange what we have: peace. The Bwa Sacré converts no one, claims no faithful, contests no ground, asks no believer to leave his house. We have no mission, no proselytism, no project of expansion. We are probably the only neighbour who wants to take nothing from you.

And we recall a fact our own statistics confirm: most Africans who fill your churches and your mosques keep, at home, something of the usages of their fathers. You are not preaching to converts of yesterday: you are preaching to men whose house has two storeys. To demonise the ground floor is to ask your faithful to destroy themselves; and a man summoned to hate his own house does not become a quieter believer for it.

V. What we ask of states and filmmakers

Of African states we ask four precise things, which cost almost nothing and would change a great deal.

Protect children and the old: let the public accusation of witchcraft, or the subjection of a child to a violent “deliverance”, be an offence that is prosecuted. Several of our countries have legislated or are preparing to; the texts must be applied and the preachers concerned must answer before a court. Recognise our spiritualities: let them cease to be a legal void, let them own a place, celebrate, register, and let our sacred woods be protected as mosques and churches are — they are also, incidentally, the last forests of the country. Teach: let our cosmogonies enter the school syllabus on the same footing as the rest, not as folklore but as thought. And publish: let censuses stop making our people disappear into the box marked “other” or “no religion”, for a people that is not counted does not exist in public policy.

Of filmmakers and producers we ask what I already asked in June: stop writing the villain by default. You would not make an imam or a priest the sacrificer of children in next week’s film, and you are right: one does not build entertainment on what a man holds most sacred. Do us the same honour. And if you wish to film our rites, film them as you film a mass: asking permission, naming what you show, filming faces with respect.

Of the platforms, finally, which host most of the accusation today: let a video accusing a named person of witchcraft be treated as what it is — an endangerment — and removed with the same dili-

gence as other dangerous content. We ask for no privilege: we ask for the common rule.

VI. Côte d'Ivoire, and the natural mediator

I come to a point dear to me, and on which I believe the Kamites have something to bring that nobody else can.

For two decades Côte d'Ivoire has been presented as a country cut in two: a Muslim north, a Christian south, and a crisis said to have been religious. That description is false, and it must be said all the more loudly because it suits those who would sell us a war. The crisis we went through was a matter of nationality, of land, of political exclusion and of generations of internal migration: it borrowed the clothes of religion because the clothes were available. The census figures show it: the two great confessions are of comparable weight, they share the same families, and the country has never known a war of religion.

Now what remains when the clothes are removed? What both camps have in common, and it is Kamite: the same ancestors, the same funerals, the same family names on both sides of the line, the same alliances between lineages, the same joking kinship that allows a Senufo and a Bété to trade ritual insults instead of blows. The common ground of Ivorians is neither the mosque nor the church: it is the country, with its dead and its usages.

That is why the Kamite is, in a crisis of this kind, the natural mediator. He owes nothing to either camp. He seeks to convert neither. He does not want the victory of a doctrine. And he has institutions made exactly for this: the palaver tree, where one

speaks until the matter is closed; the joking kinship, which defuses; the councils of elders, who have no interest in the quarrel. These are not symbols: they are procedures, and they have defused among us more conflicts than all the seminars on reconciliation.

The Bwa Sacré therefore offers this publicly, to Côte d'Ivoire as to other countries in the same situation: not one more arbitration, but a place and a method belonging to no camp. We ask no one to leave his faith in order to come and sit under the tree. We ask only that he not come there to make it win.

VII. Our children, the first worksite

I end with what I might have begun with, for if this declaration were to serve only one purpose, it would be this one.

No legal recognition, no film, no debate is worth the life of an accused child. The Bwa Sacré therefore declares, and institutes below, that the protection of children accused of witchcraft and of old people driven out is the first obligation of the federation, before even the defence of our rites. We do not ask our sanctuaries to build orphanages: we ask them to refuse, always and everywhere, the word that condemns, to report such accusations to the competent authority of their country, and to accompany the families who want to take back a child who has been driven out.

And I address the mothers, because it is they who are seen first. When a man tells you that your child is the cause of your misfortunes, he is not talking to you about the invisible: he is talking to you about your money and your exhaustion. None of our ancestors ever asked that a child be burned. Ours is a world where the child is

presented, named, protected, and where an adult's fault is repaired under a tree, among adults. Whoever tells you otherwise is selling you something.

To the young, finally, I repeat what I have said in the other declarations: you will be asked who you are, and you will be asked with a certain tone. Answer without lowering your eyes, and answer with what you have — a wood, a lineage, a tolerance few peoples have managed to keep, two thousand languages, and ancestors who are in your blood before they are in your head.

VIII. To the Kamites who pray elsewhere

It remains for me to speak to those whom this declaration most discomforts: the Christian Kamites and the Muslim Kamites, who are the majority of our own, and many of whom will read these pages with the impression that they are being asked to choose.

Nothing of the kind is being asked. The Bwa Sacré does not recruit, does not convert, and has never said that one must leave a church or a mosque to be one of ours. You are ours by descent, and you remain so whatever you pray: there is among us neither apostasy nor excommunication, and I have instituted it in writing so that no zealot may ever claim the contrary. A Kamite who fasts or takes communion remains the son of his dead. We search no man's faith: we look at his hands.

What we ask of you is of another order, and it is a small thing. Do not let your house be insulted in your presence. When a preacher explains that your grandparents were demons, it is not your faith he is defending: it is your family he is attacking, and you have the right

– within your own religion – to tell him that this is enough. When you are asked to burn a family object, know that nothing in your books obliges you to, and that what burns does not come back. When a child is accused in front of you, get him out of there: that is a duty before it is an opinion.

And keep what can be kept without betraying anything. A child's name. The genealogy recited at baptisms. Funerals done properly, with the time they need. The respect owed to the old. The share left to the one it belongs to. The words of the language. None of this is incompatible with your faith, and generations of African believers held them together without difficulty – it is the imported preaching that invented the incompatibility, not your parents.

Finally I say what I think, since I must pronounce. The two-storey house is not a weakness: it is the most intelligent thing Africa produced on contact with the great religions. It did not deny, it superimposed. The day a Kamite is made to destroy his ground floor, no better believer will have been made: a man without foundations will have been made. And that is precisely what this declaration means to protect him from.

IX. The ten answers

A doctrine is of no use if it cannot be used in a conversation. Here then, plainly, are the ten accusations our young most often receive, and what must be answered. Let them be learned; they are neither long nor difficult.

"You worship idols." We do not worship the object: the object is an address, as the gravestone is not the dead man and as a holy book is

not God. What is honoured is our dead, and nobody has ever been scandalised that a man should lay flowers on his father's grave.

"You sacrifice human beings." No, and whoever asserts it must produce a fact, a date, a trial. Our sacrifices are animals, and they are eaten: it is a family meal with a prayer. The rare crimes committed by charlatans are prosecuted under our own laws, and we ask that they be prosecuted more severely still.

"It is witchcraft." The word is not ours: it was brought by those who burned their own women. Among us the guardian keeps a register, he does not cast spells; and the first victim of that word today is an African child driven from his home.

"You are backward." Our elders counted in base twenty, read two hundred and fifty-six binary signs, and had settled the succession without civil war. Backwardness is not thinking otherwise: it is believing there is only one way to think.

"You have no God." Our languages had a name for the creator before the missionaries arrived — the missionaries borrowed it, indeed, to translate their own. And there are among us people who believe in one God, others in several powers, others in none, in the same house and without dispute.

"You have no book." We have no revelation, therefore no single book; we have a corpus, proverbs, songs, masks that are read, and now writings that are dated and sealed. A book that never needed paper is still a book.

"It is the devil who speaks to you." We have no devil: among us evil has no prince, it has causes and reparations. We cannot be

accused of serving a figure that does not exist in our world — it is yours, not ours.

"Your ancestors are evil spirits." They are members of the family who have passed to the other side. To tell a man that his dead are demons is not theology: it is an insult, and one aimed at his mother.

"You want to drag Africa backwards." We are asking for registers, sealed proof, language corpora, school syllabuses and artificial intelligence well used. That is precisely the opposite of a return.

"Then convert, like everyone else." We ask no one to convert, and therefore we ask no one to convert us. We have no mission, no proselytism, no frontier to defend: we are probably the only neighbour who wants to take nothing from you.

X. Science has proved us right

There remains the calmest answer, and it is the one I prefer, because it asks nobody to believe us: it is enough to open a book of science. We hold three things — nature, the ancestors, tolerance — and on the first two, modern science has come, in its own way and by its own roads, to say what our old people said.

Nature. Our elders did not guess the virtues of plants by dreaming: they observed. They watched the animals, and first of all those most like us. When the ape eats a fruit, a man knows he can eat it. When a sick great ape goes looking for a plant it never otherwise eats, or swallows earth and ash, it is not mistaken: it is treating itself. Naturalists ended by giving this a name — animal self-medication — and established, by observing chimpanzees in East Africa, that they

chew the bitter pith of a particular shrub when they are loaded with parasites, and that the plant is indeed active against those parasites. Our healers had the same list, obtained the same way, some thousands of years earlier.

I give one example only, and it is from my childhood. We have a tree we call *mansa yiri*: *mansa*, the king – it is the title of Mansa Musa – and *yiri*, the tree. The tree of the king. Our parents fed us its leaves until we were sick of them, without ever being able to say why; they knew only that the Ancestors had said one must eat of it without restraint. We learned later that the world calls it *Moringa oleifera*, that its leaves are among the richest known in protein, calcium, iron and vitamins, and that international organisations now distribute it against the malnutrition of our own children. The tree was indeed the king's. Our parents were right without knowing why; that is the very definition of transmitted knowledge.

The ancestors. We say that the dead have not left, that they remain members of the house, and that a man presents himself through his fathers. We were laughed at for a century. Then it was discovered that every cell of a man carries, written out, the register of those he descends from; that lineages can be traced back through it over generations; that the region a family left can be read in it. The ancestors are not an idea: they are in the body, in every cell, and they can be read there. We were right – and I add something I have already written: our custom had even provided for the man who does not know his genealogy – he spits, and the spittle presents him. It took molecular biology to understand why that was the safer road.

Tolerance. On this third point science says nothing, and rightly: it is not a question of fact but of conduct. History, however, has ruled. Look, in the whole of our history, for one war we waged to impose our dead on anyone: you will not find one. We have never converted anyone by the blade, never required a neighbour to renounce his powers, never made a scandal of a mixed marriage. This is not weakness: it is the only known model that holds together, in one village, the atheist, the man who believes in one God and the man who acknowledges several.

There is our whole position, and it stands in one line. We are asked for our book: we answer that we have nature, and that science reads it with us. We are asked for our prophet: we answer that we have the ancestors, and that they are in our blood. We are asked for our law: we answer that we have tolerance, and that history has ruled. We have nothing to envy anyone, and nothing to take from anyone.

XI. What we are building

Answering is not enough: one must produce. A house is not defended by denials, it is defended by what it builds, and here is what the Bwa Sacré is putting in hand.

A register, first, in which every presentation, every enrolment, every release is written, dated and sealed, so that a people can no longer be erased by killing its elders. Then a calendar, with its common days, so that the continent and the diaspora do the same thing at the same moment, each in his own way. Sanctuaries, wherever there are Kamites, including where there is no bush. And corpora: our

languages recorded, documented, secured, as I asked in the call of September 12.

Images must be produced too, since it was by the image that we were undone. We call on Kamite filmmakers — they exist, they are good, they are waiting to be commissioned for something else — to shoot what nobody has shot: initiation as a school, the funeral as a release, the guardian as a man who answers for his word, the mask as a book. We call on photographers to photograph our old people as scholars are photographed — with their consent, and without saying where. And we call on the young who know how to edit a video to stop sharing what a stranger sends them: nothing is filmed among us without the elders' consent, and nothing is published that shows a face, a name or a road.

Finally, we must train. The Kamite of tomorrow will be attacked by questions before he is attacked otherwise: one part of our training is a book of answers, and our sanctuaries must become schools where one learns to answer calmly, with facts, without shouting and without apologising. The rest of the training is not written in a book. He who has learned these ten answers will no longer lower his eyes; he who has read the writings will know why.

And we invite those who are not ours: researchers, museum curators, journalists, teachers, believers of every confession. We ask neither approval nor defence: we ask to be described in our own words, to be cited when we are studied, and to be given back what has danced for our dead. What we have is thousands of years old and has never been told by us; the time has come.

What this declaration institutes

So that this should depend neither on a mood nor on one man, I fix in twelve points the position of the Bwa Sacré, valid until the sages, assembled and voting, decide otherwise.

First point. The demonisation of Kamite spiritualities is a daily injury, and the Bwa Sacré treats it as such: it is named, documented, dated and opposed.

Second point. We demonise no one in return. No text of the Bwa Sacré will say of another spirituality what is said of ours, and we never criticise the faith of a man at prayer.

Third point. The protection of children accused of witchcraft and of old people driven out comes before every other obligation of the federation. None of our sanctuaries will ever pronounce such an accusation, and no one may base one on our traditions.

Fourth point. Paid deliverance directed against a named member of a family is a fraud, and we shall name it as such.

Fifth point. We refuse the imposed vocabulary. Our ceremonies bear their own names; the words “fetish”, “witch doctor”, “animism”, “witch” are not ours and will not be used in our acts.

Sixth point. Our sacred woods, our cemeteries, our masks and our objects of worship are sacred places and goods, protected on the same footing as those of other confessions. A mask that has danced for a dead man is not for sale.

Seventh point. We ask states for the legal recognition of our spiritualities, their teaching in school syllabuses, and their counting in censuses.

Eighth point. We ask churches and mosques to cease teaching that our ancestors are demons, and to disavow those of their own who accuse named persons.

Ninth point. We ask filmmakers and platforms for the common rule: no villain by default, no named accusation broadcast, a right of reply.

Tenth point. To verify is a duty. Whoever shares a witchcraft accusation without verifying takes part in what follows.

Eleventh point. The Bwa Sacré offers itself as mediator in conflicts presented as religious, because it belongs to no camp and possesses procedures made for that purpose.

Twelfth point. We sweep before our own door. Whoever accuses, drives out, sells or extorts in the name of our traditions is no guardian: he is disavowed, and handed over to the justice of his country.

Five centuries of contact with the revealed religions have left us a school, a hospital, a written language — and a shame. The greatest success of demonisation is not what the world thinks of us: it is what we think of ourselves. A people that is insulted defends itself; a people that insults itself has no adversary left to convince.

We come out of this by three simple gestures, and this declaration asks for no others. To name: to say what is happening, with facts and dates, without shouting. To refuse: to stop using other people's words for our own affairs, and to stop apologising for existing. To protect: to put our children and our old people out of reach, including out of our own.

To those who demonise us we wish no harm and we ask nothing but the common rule. To those of our brothers who demonise us we say that they are working for others, unpaid. And to all Kamites, of the diaspora as of the continent, we say the only sentence that matters: what you received from your dead is not a demon. It is a house, and it is open.

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré
BAZURU
Abidjan, September 17, 2026

— Chapter XI —

Judging Without Prison

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré on African justice before the revealed religions and before the coloniser, on what was put in its place, and on the instituted palaver: a proposal to repair, to appease the land and to reconcile

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition — original French edition:
Juger sans prison

Preliminary note

This declaration concerns the most everyday thing there is after bread: the settlement of disputes. It starts from an observation that anyone can verify around him, then goes back to what our peoples did before the arrival of the revealed religions and before that of the coloniser, from one end of the continent to the other; it describes what was installed in their place; and it proposes something usable, at once, by any state that wished it.

I do not speak here as a theorist of law. I speak as a man who was for nineteen years a sworn expert before the courts of an African country, who saw from the inside what a trial costs a family, and who also saw, in his village, far graver matters settled in a season under a tree, without either party keeping any hatred from it. That double experience is the only title I claim.

Three precautions. This declaration does not say that the justice of our ancestors was perfect: it had precise defects, and I write them down myself, for those who kept silent about them would be preparing the failure of the proposal. It asks for the abolition of no court and no code: it asks that what was shown the door be put back in its place. And it targets no religion: the imported law I speak of came with the flag, not with the book. The references are at the end of the volume.

PART ONE

What we had

From north to south, from east to west: the institutions through which the African peoples rendered justice before the revealed religions and before the coloniser

I. Opening: a missing word

Let us begin with an observation anyone can verify this evening, by calling his grandmother.

Take the word “prison” and look for it in our languages. In Bambara and in Dioula one says *kaso*; in Wolof too. It is not a Bambara word: it is the French *cachot*, the dungeon, which entered our languages with those who built it. In Swahili one says *gereza* and *jela*: the one comes from Portuguese, the other from English. Everywhere the same phenomenon: the thing arrived with the name, and the name with the ship.

What does one conclude from a language that lacks a word? Not that its speakers were incapable of imagining confinement — people knew very well how to tie up a dangerous man for the night, for the time of a palaver. But that they had not made of it an institution, a penalty, a permanent building with guards and a budget. What is missing from a language is what a people did not judge necessary to name, because it did not do it.

Now a people that does not lock up must do something else: there are thefts, blows, adulteries, debts and murders among us as everywhere. If the answer was not the cell, what was it? That is the whole question of this declaration, and the answer is the same across the continent, with variations of language: reparation, pronounced in public by men whom both parties accept, and followed by reintegration.

I add an engineer's remark, for it illuminates what follows. A prison is a costly technology: it must be built, fed, guarded, and it produces two results — it takes an arm away from production, and it returns to society, a few years later, a man harder than he was on entry. Our societies had neither the means nor the wish for that luxury: they needed arms, peace between houses, and people able to pass one another at the market the next day. So they devised something else, and they devised it everywhere.

II. The tree, the court, the assembly

Before entering the regions, let us describe the common arrangement, for the underlying unity is striking to anyone who compares.

There is a place, and it is public: a tree at the centre of the village, a square, a palaver hut with posts so low that no one can stand up in it to fight – the Dogon call it the *togu-na*, and the height of the roof is an institution in itself. There is a time: one does not judge in the hour of anger; one summons, one lets things cool, one listens all day if need be. There are judges who are not professionals of the law but men – and often women – whose authority comes from reputation, from age, from position within the alliances, and who have no interest in the matter.

There is a procedure, and this is where people are most mistaken about us: the palaver is not idle talk. Each speaks without being interrupted, for as long as he wishes; the witnesses come; proverbs serve as case law, for a proverb is a memorised rule; and one does not first look for the guilty man, one looks for what has been broken and what must be laid down to close it. There is finally an outcome that is not a sentence but a settlement: a compensation in figures, an animal, a piece of work, a public apology, sometimes a marriage alliance between the two families – and the word given before all that the matter is closed, that it will not be reopened, and that it will not be held against anyone again.

Two features complete the picture, and they are foreign to the law that was imposed on us. The first is collective responsibility: it is not only the man who pays, it is his house, which gives the whole kindred a direct interest in keeping him quiet – the best preventive police ever invented. The second is reintegration: at the end, people eat together. The aim is not to cut a limb from the body; it is to put the body back in a condition to walk.

III. West Africa: the charter, the palaver, the cousin

Let us begin at home, since it is the country I know by my feet.

Around 1236, after Kirina, Sundiata gathered the chiefs of the clans at Kurukan Fuga and had a charter proclaimed which the traditionalists still recite and which UNESCO has inscribed on the heritage of humanity. This oral text is not a prayer: it is a constitution. It distributes functions among the clans, guarantees the right to life and to bodily integrity, organises the safety of strangers and of women, regulates inheritance and movement, forbids certain forms of violence, and institutes the *sanankuya*, the joking kinship, which allows two groups to trade ritual insults instead of blows. Seven centuries before the modern conventions, West Africa had set down by the word what Europe would set down in writing much later.

Below the charter, ordinary life was regulated by the palaver, and each people had its organ: the council of village elders, the chief of the land — who is not the political chief but the one who answers for the soil and the sacrifices —, the lineage heads, the initiation societies. Among the Bwa, a country without king or town, everything was settled that way: it is even the reason why our villages had no walls. Among the Senufo, the *poro*, a seven-year school, trained the men who would later sit under the tree. Among the Dogon, the *togu-na* and the mask societies.

A word on the role of women, for on this point we are believed worse than we are. The women's societies — among the Bwa, among the Senufo, among the Akan with the queen mother — had their

own jurisdictions over the matters that concerned them, and their opinion weighed on the rest. I instituted the Queen Mothers in the Bwa Sacré by leaning on this, and not against custom.

And there is the sanankuya, which must be explained to strangers because they cannot get over it: two peoples bound by this alliance may insult each other publicly without consequence, and this institutional permission to insult is a firewall. Researchers have shown that at the height of the recent crises, in several of our countries, joking kinship allowed men to defuse roadblocks and lynchings by a joke the other was bound to accept. No penal code in the world has an equivalent.

IV. The Gulf of Guinea: the king who is judged, and the women who judge

Let us go down towards the forest, where one finds powerful states and, contrary to what is imagined, formidable counter-powers.

Among the Ashanti, justice is rendered in court: the chief sits surrounded by his councillors and by the *okyeame*, the spokesman, who reformulates the words spoken and prevents outbursts. Cases are settled by fines, compensations, reparations – and no chief judges alone: the queen mother, who designates the successor and speaks in public, may contradict him, and a chief who abuses his position may be destooled. Power there is a seat, not a man; one can be brought down from it.

Among the Yoruba, the king himself is held in check: the council of chiefs, and above all the *ogboni* society, guardian of the earth, which judges matters of blood and may oppose the sovereign. In several

cities, a king who had lost confidence received a sign and had to leave the stage. Ordinary matters were settled within the family, then before the head of the quarter, then before the court — a staircase, with an appeal at every step.

Among the Igbo, there is no king at all, and it is one of the purest examples in the world: the village assembly where every adult man speaks, the age grades which carry out the decisions, and the *umuada*, the association of the daughters of the lineage married elsewhere, who return as a body to settle the quarrels of their father's house — and whose verdict no one disputes, because they are at once of the inside and of the outside. Justice rendered by women, in a society described to us as patriarchal: that is what is erased when we are spoken of in bulk.

Let us note everywhere the same staircase: the family, then the lineage, then the quarter, then the village, then the chief's court. A matter went up only if it could not be settled below. That is exactly what modern systems now call, rediscovering it at great expense, the graduated settlement of disputes.

V. The Horn and the East: the gada, the xeer, the elders

Let us go east, where perhaps the greatest African political monument stands, and one of the least known among us.

The Oromo of Ethiopia have the *gada*. It is not a vague custom: it is a system of age classes in which power changes hands every eight years, without exception and without discussion; in which the leaders are chosen, controlled and may be removed; in which the

general assembly, meeting periodically, revises the laws, proclaims them in public and has them memorised. UNESCO inscribed it in 2016 as an indigenous democratic socio-political system. A limited term, a control of the chiefs, a legislative assembly: let us no longer be told that democracy reached us by boat.

The Somalis have the *xeer*, one of the oldest customary laws still in use. Its logic is entirely reparative: a harm is compensated in camels according to a tariff known to all; the kindred pays and receives collectively; the elders of the two groups negotiate until agreement; and peace is sealed. It is a system so robust that it went on working during the decades when the state itself had disappeared – something no imported code has ever achieved.

In Ethiopia again, the *shimglina*: elders interpose themselves, listen, obtain forgiveness and compensation, and the matter is closed by a meal. Among the Kikuyu, the *kiama*, a council of elders, judged and set the fines. Among the Tiv of Nigeria, the *jir*. Everywhere the same architecture: men accepted on both sides, a public hearing, a tariff, a reconciliation carried out.

And everywhere, too, the same discreet foundation: the oath. Among us, a man who swears before the fetish or on the Ancestors does not lie, because he believes what he swears; it is an instrument of proof of an efficacy the modern courts silently envy us. It must be said without naivety: this instrument has also served for abuses. But it explains why our procedures did without lawyers: the truth was established by the man's commitment before what he truly feared.

VI. The south and the centre: the kgotla, the reasonable man, the men of integrity

Let us go further down, towards systems part of which has survived to this day in positive law.

Among the Tswana, the *kgotla* is the place where the chief sits in public with his people. Any man may speak there, and the established formula says that the chief is chief by the people. Botswana did not abolish this institution after independence: it recognised it by law; its customary courts still today handle the great majority of the country's cases, in the local language, without lawyers, with appeals to the ordinary courts. It is the demonstration that a custom can become a modern institution without denying itself.

Among the Lozi of the Zambezi valley, a foreign jurist came and sat in the courts in the middle of the twentieth century and brought back from them a discovery that shook his discipline: our judges reasoned with an abstract standard equivalent to that of the English – what a reasonable man would have done in the place of the accused. In other words: law, with its categories, its precedents and its standards, in a language without writing.

In Burundi, the *bashingantahe*: men – and later women – invested after an inquiry into their morals, who receive the staff of investiture and arbitrate the conflicts of the neighbourhood. Among the Acholi of Uganda, the *mato oput*: after a homicide, the two clans negotiate the compensation, then drink the bitter root together; the bitterness is swallowed, and the matter is extinguished. This rite served, after years of war, to reintegrate fighters nobody knew

where to put — for there was no prison for ten thousand former child soldiers.

And the essential must be said, which this whole chapter demonstrates: these institutions are not dead. They settle today, according to the available studies, the very great majority of the disputes of rural Africa — often four cases out of five. Official law is a minority in the real life of our peoples; it ignores this, and that is its problem.

VII. The north, the desert, and the chief who has no power

Two last families, to finish the tour, and because each brings a piece the others do not have.

Among the Amazigh of North Africa, long before the arrival of the empires and the books, the *tajmaat* — the village assembly — deliberates and judges; customary law, the *azref*, sets the fines and the rules; the *anaya* is the protection granted to a man in danger, which no one may violate without dishonouring himself. Here again: an assembly, a tariff, an institution of asylum.

And there is the finest invention of the continent, among the Nuer of the upper Nile: the leopard-skin chief. This man has neither army, nor court, nor power of constraint; he has one thing only: the right to shelter the murderer in his home to shield him from vengeance, then to go back and forth between the two families until they accept a number of cattle. He can impose nothing. He can only make acceptable, by his person, a peace that honour forbade anyone to propose. Ethnologists have written volumes on it: it is the institution of mediation in its pure state, without public force.

I pause on it a moment, because it says something about the title I bear. A chief without power of constraint is not a weak chief: he is the only one both camps can accept. His strength is precisely that he has nothing to gain. That is what our peoples understood and what modern states have forgotten: to end a quarrel, one needs someone who is of no camp and who wants nothing.

VIII. The common grammar

From this survey I draw seven rules found everywhere, whatever the language and the political form. It is they, and not the costumes, that constitute African justice.

First rule: repair rather than punish. The question is not “how much does he deserve?” but “what must be laid down so that the thing is closed?”. The victim and his house receive something; the modern state, for its part, pockets the fine and leaves the victim empty-handed.

Second rule: responsibility goes beyond the individual. The house pays and stands surety. It is hard on the family; it is what makes it vigilant.

Third rule: publicity. Everything is said before everyone, at the place known to all. There is no secret file, no written procedure in a language the parties do not speak.

Fourth rule: time. One lets things cool, one adjourns, one comes back. Slowness is not a defect: it is the instrument that disarms.

Fifth rule: the judge is accepted before he judges. No one is judged by a stranger appointed elsewhere. The one who decides has been chosen or approved by both parties.

Sixth rule: closure is real. When it is over, it is over: no more reproach, no reopening, people eat together. The criminal record, which pursues a man thirty years after he has paid, is an invention foreign to our law.

Seventh rule: the man is not cut from the body. There is no prison. The heaviest penalty is exclusion, and it is rare, reserved for the incorrigible — because a man outside is a man lost to all.

These seven rules are not folklore: they are a doctrine, and it is coherent. The world is now groping its way towards it, under the names of restorative justice, compulsory mediation, alternative sentences and community justice. We are three thousand years ahead and fifty years behind in shame.

IX. What was wrong

A man who presents the work of his fathers without stating its defects is not an heir: he is a salesman. Here then, written by us, is the list of what was wrong in the justice of our ancestors. It is the condition of credibility of everything that will follow.

The place of women. They had their own jurisdictions and their voice weighed; but in most of our systems they did not enter the council that decided matters of land and inheritance, and that is precisely where they had the most to lose. Widowhood has produced and still produces the worst abuses: a woman stripped at her husband's death, a daughter set aside from the succession, a mother

separated from her children in the name of a rule of lineage. No nostalgia will make me write the contrary.

The weight of the elders. The system gave the word to age, which is wise; it often refused it to the younger, which is less so. A young man in conflict with a notable had no weapon, and the emigration of our young towards the towns begins there as much as in the economy.

The stranger and the newcomer. He who is not of the lineage, he who arrived twenty years ago, he who was received on another's land: all weighed less in the balance. A large part of our land conflicts today comes from there — not from custom itself, but from the fact that it never clearly wrote down the rights of those it had received.

The accusation of witchcraft. This is the gravest flaw, and I have denounced it elsewhere: where proof was lacking, the cause was sometimes sought in the invisible, and the invisible conveniently pointed to the widow whose field was coveted, the child too many, the old man without a defender. Our traditions do not command this; they left a door through which it entered.

The absence of appeal. In many of our systems there was a staircase — the family, the lineage, the chief — but no recourse against the one who sat at the top. A partial notable could twist a case without anyone being able to reopen it.

Collective responsibility. It made the kindred vigilant; it also made the innocent pay for the guilty, and it could lock a man inside his brother's fault.

There is the debit side. It is real, it is heavy, and it explains why a part of our fellow citizens turned to the state's court believing they would find protection there. What we propose in the third part therefore does not consist in restoring the past: it consists in keeping the method and correcting, one by one, these six defects. An institution that refuses to name its flaws does not deserve to be entrusted with men.

PART TWO

What was put in its place

The prison, the imported court, the language of the trial — and why, in spite of everything, people still go to the chief

I. The prison, an imported building

The prison did not come to us through the evolution of African law: it arrived with the colonial administration, at the same time as the post, the customs house and forced labour. The historians who have worked on the question document it from one end of the continent to the other: the first African penal establishments are forts, barracks and annexes of military posts, built to hold porters, recalcitrants and unpaid taxes.

Its first function, moreover, was not to punish crime: it was to supply labour and to break refusals. People were locked up for unpaid tax, for refusing to carry, for absence from the work site, for

insolence towards the commandant – and, in 1915 and 1916 in our country, for having refused to give men to a war that was not ours. That is one of the reasons why the prison has never had, in the eyes of our peoples, the legitimacy it has elsewhere: it began as an instrument of conquest.

Sixty years after independence, the building has remained and so has the idea, but the means never came. In many of our countries our prisons hold two to three times their capacity; a considerable share of their occupants – often half, sometimes more – have not been tried and have been waiting for months or years; the food is often brought by the families; and a man goes in for the theft of a telephone next to men nothing should allow near a young man.

Let us look at the result as an engineer, without passion. The system costs a great deal, produces little security, never compensates the victim, destroys the working capacity of the convicted man and burdens his family with a lasting shame. If it were a structure, one would say it is badly dimensioned, badly maintained, and does not meet the specification. We would never have built that ourselves.

II. The imported court

The second object delivered with the flag is the court, and one must describe what it asks of a villager to understand why he does not use it.

First one must get there: the court is at the district capital, thirty, fifty, a hundred kilometres away, and one must pay for transport, sleep on the spot, come back. Then one must speak a language one does not speak: proceedings are held in French, in English or in

Portuguese, and the interpreter, when there is one, translates what he understands. One must write: petitions, documents, stamps, when a part of our fellow citizens do not read. One must pay: the lawyer, the fees, the journeys, and often a great deal more. One must wait: years, sometimes. And one must accept, at the end, a decision rendered by a man one has never seen, in the name of a text one has never read, against an adversary with whom one will nevertheless have to start farming side by side again the next day.

Add the most destructive mechanism of all: the trial is a zero-sum game. There is a winner and a loser, and the loser goes away with a hatred the procedure has fed for three years. Where the palaver ended in a meal, the court ends in a vengeance postponed. In our countryside people say it in one sentence: the trial wins the case and loses the village.

I was for nineteen years an expert before these courts and I want to be fair: there are in our courts magistrates of integrity, competent and courageous, who work without means and who hold on. It is not they whom I call into question. I call into question an architecture designed elsewhere, for other societies, and never adapted since.

III. The law that came with the books

A word must be said about the religious laws, without polemic, for they occupy a real place among us.

Where Islam settled, the judge of religious law long regulated marriage, inheritance and a share of disputes; in several of our countries this law remains for personal status. Where Christianity

settled, the ecclesiastical authorities judged matters of marriage and morals, and the missions often served as courts in practice. These laws have their coherence and their merits, and millions of Africans sincerely refer to them.

What I observe is of another order, and it is an observation of method: these laws are, they too, revealed laws. They hold their rule from a text that came down elsewhere, and the judge there is the interpreter of a word, not the conciliator of two houses. Their logic is that of conformity, not that of reparation. They can therefore be just, but they cannot be *ours* in the sense in which our institutions were: they do not first seek to close a wound between neighbours.

And here is the result we live with: the Kamite of today has three justices over his head — that of the state, that of his religion, that of his custom — of which the first two ignore each other and the third has no status. When the three say three different things about an inheritance, it is the family that pays.

IV. What the replacement lost us

Let us count precisely what was lost in the exchange, for it is this list that governs the proposal.

We lost the victim. In our law, she was at the centre: it was she who was compensated, and the settlement was closed only when she had received. In the imported law, it is the state that is the party: the fine goes to the Treasury, and the victim, if she wants something, must bring a second suit she has not the means to bring.

We lost reintegration. The convicted man comes out marked, without work, without credit, sometimes rejected by his house;

nothing was provided to put him back inside, because the system no longer takes an interest in him after the door.

We lost proximity and language: one judges far away, in a foreign language, which amounts to saying that one does not judge people but files.

We lost closure. The palaver ended; the trial, for its part, goes on in appeal, in cassation, in rancour, and the criminal record pursues the man long after he has paid.

And we lost moral authority, which is the only thing that made the whole edifice hold without police. Our elders had no gendarmes: they had credit. When the state withdrew jurisdiction from the chiefs without withdrawing the burden, it left them with the authority and without the means — and many ended by selling what was left to them, which explains a part of the abuses now laid at the door of the chieftaincy.

V. What the figures say

Orders of magnitude must be given, otherwise one is discussing impressions.

In most West African countries the official courts are counted in dozens for populations of tens of millions, and the bulk of their cases comes from the towns. The field studies conducted over the past twenty years on legal pluralism converge: between seventy and ninety per cent of the disputes of ordinary life — land, family, debts, blows — are settled outside the court, before a chief, a council, an imam, a pastor or a notable. Official law is therefore not the law of the country: it is the law of a minority and of grave cases.

Let us look next at detention: in several of our countries, half or more of the persons held have not been tried; occupancy rates commonly exceed twice the capacity. This is not an abstract moral scandal: it is a queue. A system that does not judge within a reasonable time does not render justice; it promises it.

Let us look finally at what it costs. A country that must build, feed and guard thousands of untried detainees spends, every year, the equivalent of dozens of schools and dispensaries — for a result nobody dares evaluate. If an engineer proposed a structure of that yield, no one would sign the contract with him.

VI. Why people go to the chief anyway

Let us end this part with the most stubborn fact: despite a century of prohibitions, contempt and laws, our peoples still go to the chief, to the elder, to the council. One must understand the reasons, for they are the specification of any reform.

People go because it is near: one is there the same day, without transport or a night at the hotel. Because it is free or nearly so: a chicken, a calabash, a symbolic sum. Because one speaks one's language there, and the proverbs cited there are arguments one understands. Because the one who judges knows the families, the lands and the antecedents, and cannot be told just anything. Because the solution there is concrete: a boundary marker moved back, a goat, apologies before everyone. And above all because one comes out of it with the possibility of going on living together.

What is lost there too must be written, for the proposal of the third part has value only if it corrects it: women are sometimes badly

treated there, above all in matters of inheritance and widowhood; the younger and the strangers to the village weigh less there than the elders and the natives; a partial notable can twist the case, and there is not always an appeal; the accusation of witchcraft has served and still serves to strip widows. These are real defects, and they have a clear cause: an institution that no longer has a status no longer has a safeguard. One does not reform what one has driven out; one controls only what one recognises.

VII. The double language of our states

It remains to say what our own states have done with all this since independence, for the responsibility has long since ceased to be colonial.

Almost everywhere, the first gesture was unification: one law, one judge, one code, in the name of the equality of citizens and of nation-building. The intention was respectable, and the argument was not absurd: we were coming out of a colonial system that had frozen customs by codifying them in its own manner, often leaning on chiefs it had itself appointed. Many of our jurists of the first generation sincerely wished to be done with that.

But unification was proclaimed without being financed. Jurisdiction was withdrawn from the chieftaincies without giving the courts the means to take it over: there were never enough magistrates, clerks, courtrooms, roads or budget to judge the cases of a continent. The result is a void, and that void was filled by what was there: custom, without status, without control, without writing, and now without safeguard.

To which is added a permanent double language. The same states that do not recognise customary justice summon the chiefs for elections, ask them to calm the neighbourhoods, lean on them for land, for the census, for vaccination and for security. They are given every burden and no right. And when an abuse occurs, it is suddenly discovered that the chieftaincy has no status – which is convenient, since it avoids having to answer for it.

The worst effect of this hypocrisy is financial. A notable who receives cases from morning to night without any allowance ends by accepting what is brought to him, and the usage settles in: whoever gives the most obtains the most favourable hearing. The conditions of corruption were created, and then it was reproached to those who had been placed in them. To restore a status to these institutions is therefore not a favour done to tradition: it is the only way to make them controllable.

PART THREE

What we propose

What Burkina has just done, what Côte d'Ivoire has achieved on the land, what Rwanda and South Africa have learned – and the instituted palaver, in articles

I. What Burkina has just done

Let us begin with the most recent example, and the most instructive, because it comes from a neighbouring country and is under way before our eyes.

Burkina Faso has given its customary bodies a judicial status and installed, on May 22, 2026, customary courts – the law known as *Faso Bu-Kaooré*. The principle is simple: courts composed of recognised customary figures, sitting in the national languages, with a flexible procedure that favours mediation and conciliation, compet-

ent over local family, land and community disputes — without replacing the ordinary justice system, which they relieve.

This gesture must be saluted, for it breaks with a century of contempt: an African state at last recognises that what actually settles the affairs of its citizens deserves a status, a place and a dignity. The criticisms must also be heard, because they are serious and they concern us: the risk of arbitrariness, the absence of jurists in the judging panels, the weight of traditional authority over parties who cannot contradict it, and insufficient guarantees for women, the young and the vulnerable; the question of recourse before the ordinary courts is, as I write, the most debated of all.

My position is clear: the principle is right, and the criticisms are useful. They do not condemn the reform; they write its specification. That is precisely what the proposal that follows strives to do: keep what is best in the palaver, and stop, one by one, the holes through which injustice enters.

II. What Côte d'Ivoire has achieved on the land

The second example is Ivorian, it is less discussed, and it works. It concerns what causes the most deaths among us after the road: the land.

Since the 1998 law on rural land tenure, the recognition of a right over village land does not begin at the ministry: it begins in the village. The inquiry is adversarial and public; a village committee, on which the chief and the notables sit, identifies the boundaries and the rights-holders; the neighbours are summoned and sign;

disputes are emptied on the spot, while they are hot, before those who know who cleared what and in which year. Only afterwards does the administration issue the land certificate, then the title. In town, the principle is the same in its own way: the file for a definitive concession order starts from an attestation by the village chief, and that document counts as customary recognition before any administrative writing.

Look at the mechanism, for it is remarkable: the state did not tell custom to step aside, and custom did not block the state. Each does what it knows how to do — the chieftaincy establishes the facts and obtains the agreement of men; the administration registers, guarantees and makes it enforceable against third parties. The result is plain: where the procedure is actually followed, tension subsides, because no one can say any longer that his land was taken from him in an office in Abidjan. What both parties accept is not the paper: it is the public inquiry that preceded the paper.

From this example I draw the formula of the whole third part, and I ask that it be remembered: **custom establishes the facts and reconciles; the state registers, guarantees and protects the weak.** That division works. It works for the land; it can work for the rest.

III. What Rwanda and South Africa have learned

Two other experiences, heavier ones, each bring a lesson: a success and a limit.

In Rwanda, after the genocide of the Tutsi, the state faced an impossible equation: hundreds of thousands of people to try, a few

dozen surviving magistrates, and prisons already bursting. It reopened a village institution, the *gacaca*, "justice on the grass": thousands of elected courts, sitting in the open air, where survivors and accused spoke to one another before the hill, and where confession and a request for forgiveness reduced the penalty. Nearly two million cases were tried in ten years. No ordinary court in the world could have done that. The criticisms exist, and they are founded: pressure, false testimony, absence of lawyers, crimes committed by one side left out of scope. But the fact remains: an African institution made possible what imported law declared impossible.

In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission substituted for mass trials an exchange: public truth for amnesty, and the hearing of victims before the nation. Its inspiration is named by those who led it: *ubuntu*, the idea that a man is a man through other men. Here again a success — a country that did not tip over — and a limit: the material reparation promised to the victims never came at the level announced, and the bitterness remained. The lesson is plain: the word without reparation does not close the wound. Our law knew it, which never separated forgiveness from the goat.

IV. The instituted palaver: the proposal

Here is what the Bwa Sacré proposes to states, to chieftaincies and to citizens. It is neither a step backwards nor a dream: it is a mechanism, and it is made to be copied, corrected and improved.

One. Institute, at the level of the village and the quarter, a *palaver chamber* recognised by law, composed of three to five members: an elder designated by custom, a woman designated by the women of

the place, a young person designated by the age grades, and, when one of the parties requests it, an approved person from outside the village. No one sits in a case in which he has an interest or a close kinship; recusal is a matter of right and may be requested without reasons once per party.

Two. Give it jurisdiction over what it knows how to do: field boundaries and land usages, debts and loans, inheritances and widowhood, insults and blows without gravity, disputes of neighbourhood, of market and of family. And expressly forbid it what it must not touch: blood, rape, harm to children, trafficking, titled land, and any case in which a party risks his liberty.

Three. Fix the procedure: public hearing, in the language of the place, on a fixed day; each speaks without interruption; the witnesses are heard; a cooling-off period of at least one moon may be ordered; the agreement is read aloud before the assembly before being settled.

Four. Write, and this is the point that changes everything. Each case receives a number, a date, the names of the parties, the subject, the decision, the time limit for execution and the signature or thumbprint of both parties; the register is kept in duplicate, and its fingerprint is sealed periodically, so that no one can remake it after the fact. What custom held by memory, we now hold by proof — it is the only thing the twenty-first century really adds to our elders.

Five. Organise recourse: any party may, within a short time, bring the case before the state judge, who reviews not the substance of the custom but four things — that the chamber had jurisdiction, that the procedure was followed, that consent was free, and that the decision does not violate fundamental rights, in particular those of

women and children. Without this review, the chamber is a power without a brake; with it, it is a court.

Six. Make execution possible: the agreement homologated by the judge counts as an enforceable title. A justice whose decisions are not executed is only advice.

Seven. Pay the people. A chamber member receives a modest and public allowance, and is forbidden to receive anything whatsoever from the parties. This is the most important measure of all: the corruption of the chieftaincy begins the day it is entrusted with a burden without being given the means to live.

V. The safeguards

A proposal without safeguards would be a dangerous proposal. Here are ours, and they are not negotiable.

The woman first. She sits, and her presence is not decorative: no case of inheritance, widowhood or violence within the family may be judged without a woman being on the panel. No custom invoked may deprive a widow of her house, a daughter of her share, a wife of her children: on these points the law of the state prevails, and the judge sees to it on recourse.

The accusation of witchcraft next: no palaver chamber hears it, none receives it, none founds anything on it. Whoever invokes it to dispossess someone is sent before the criminal judge. I instituted this in another declaration this morning; I repeat it here, for it is by that door that abuses enter.

Consent next: no one is compelled to go to the palaver; any party may, at any moment, prefer the court, and this must be told him at the start of the hearing, aloud. A mediation obtained by the pressure of the group is not a mediation: it is a capitulation.

Transparency finally: the register may be consulted, the allowances are published, the members are renewed at a fixed term — and I suggest eight years, out of respect for the Oromo, who demonstrated that term limits are not a Western invention.

VI. The first worksite: the land

If one had to begin with one thing only, it would be this one, and the Ivorian example shows why.

The land is, in our countries, the first cause of conflict, the first cause of hatred between neighbours, and one of the first causes of violent death. It is also the domain in which custom is most competent: nobody in a ministry knows who cleared which plot in which year, who lent to whom, or what had been agreed in the grandparents' time. And it is the domain in which writing is most lacking: most of our rural land is covered by no title.

The mechanism is therefore obvious, and it already exists in pieces: the palaver chamber establishes the facts and gets the boundaries accepted; the inquiry is public and adversarial, with the neighbours summoned; the result is written, signed, dated, sealed; the administration then issues the certificate and the title, which become enforceable against third parties. What Côte d'Ivoire has put in place since 1998 for rural land, with its village committees, and

what the practice of the village attestation does in town, is the prototype of all the rest.

I add the precaution that is almost always missing: that the rights of women and of non-natives be entered in the same register and with the same force. Many of our land conflicts do not come from custom itself, but from the fact that a part of the inhabitants was left off the paper. A register that enters only half the rights-holders prepares the next war.

VII. Côte d'Ivoire, a road to reconciliation

I come to what made me write this declaration, and I say it with caution, for it concerns my country.

We still bear the consequences of two decades of crisis. Much has been said, much has been signed, and commissions have been held that nobody remembers. What has not been done is the palaver: to name, before the people of the place, what was taken, what was burned, who left and who settled; and to lay down something — a restitution, a compensation, a piece of work, an apology — until the thing is closed. So long as we reason with the imported mind, in which a culprit, a trial and a penalty are required, we shall not get there: none of our villages wishes to designate a culprit among its own sons.

Yet the method exists, and we have proved it on the land. What rural land tenure has achieved — seating the native and the non-native together before the committee, having it said publicly who cleared, who planted, who bought, and writing down the result — is exactly the procedure reconciliation needs. This is not an image:

most of the grudges of the crisis are matters of land, of occupied houses and of harvests taken. They are not settled by speeches: they are settled plot by plot, under a tree, with a register.

And someone is needed who is of no camp. That is the role the Bwa Sacré publicly offers, as I wrote in today's declaration on the revealed religions: we ask no one to leave his faith or his party in order to come and sit; we ask that he come without them. A leopard-skin chief could impose nothing: he only made acceptable a peace that honour forbade anyone to propose. That is all we claim to be.

VIII. What writing and the machine add

It must now be said what our elders did not have and what we have. This is no detail: it is precisely what turns a good custom into an institution, and it is what the palaver lacked to hold in a country of thirty million inhabitants where people move, buy, and die far from their village.

The palaver rested on the memory of those present. So long as the parties, their children and their neighbours stayed put, that was enough: forty witnesses are worth a notarised deed. But as soon as one of the sons leaves for the city, the elder who presided dies, and the grandson comes back thirty years later with a lawyer, memory weighs nothing against a paper. That is how just agreements, honoured for two generations, collapsed before a court that knew only documents. The defect was not in the judgement: it was in its preservation.

So I write the register among the measures, and I insist. The register is not a concession made to the administration: it is the protection of the weak. He who has a good memory, a good lawyer and connections has no need of writing. It is the widow, the younger son, the stranger settled for twenty years, the labourer who cleared without a contract: those are the ones who need a line to say, once and for all, what was recognised before everyone. The word given publicly, written and sealed the same day, is worth a thousand trials.

I add this, which is not trivial for us: the register must be kept in the language in which the case was pleaded, with its translation into the official language alongside. An agreement hastily translated by a hurried clerk is an agreement already distorted. There are words in our languages that have no equivalent: what is “laid down” is not what is “paid”, he who “enters the hut” is not he who “inherits”, and the silence of an elder is not consent in the sense of the code. Every time custom was translated into the coloniser’s vocabulary, it was made harder and less just, because it was lent categories it did not have.

And I go further, since we live in 2026 and I have already said it elsewhere: the machine can serve us here, and we would be wrong to refuse it out of mistrust. A palaver hearing can be recorded with the parties’ agreement, transcribed in the language of the place, translated, indexed. What once required a lettered clerk our villages did not have is done today with a telephone. A palaver chamber in a Bété, Senufo or Malinké village can produce, the same evening, a record readable by a judge in Abidjan without anyone having had to plead in French. That is what I call the tool that serves: it does not replace the elder, it gives him back his voice before the administration.

I set three limits, however, and I want them read as loudly as the encouragement. First, nothing is recorded without the parties knowing it and accepting it; a palaver filmed without people's knowledge is no longer a palaver, it is surveillance. Second, no machine judges: it writes, it translates, it files, it never says who is wrong. The day a program is asked to propose the reparation, we shall have rebuilt the same thing as the imported code, with the same coldness and without even a man to talk to. Third, the registers belong to the communities and to the state that guarantees them, not to the company that supplies the tool. Our words are not merchandise, and our conflicts are not a deposit of data.

Well kept, this register will end by being worth more than the decisions themselves. After ten years, a country will know what it has never known: how many cases are really settled, which ones come back, which reparations hold and which are broken, which regions burn and why. None of our states has that knowledge today. It is custom, once written, that will give it to them.

IX. What it costs, and what it yields

I shall be told it is a fine project and that there is no money. I answer with figures, because I spent nineteen years costing structures before signing reports.

A remand prison must be built, guarded, fed and given medical care. It needs land, walls, water, warders paid every month, transfers to the court, and a daily ration for each detainee for years. In our countries, the bulk of that expense goes to men who have not yet been tried: we pay, every day, to hold people of whom we do not yet

know whether they did anything. And that expense produces nothing: neither reparation for the victim, nor work, nor tax, nor peace. It produces a family without income outside and a damaged man inside.

A palaver chamber needs none of that. It sits under a tree, in a borrowed courtyard, in a town-hall room on Saturday. Its members are of the place: they cost neither lodging nor transport. Its expense fits in three lines: a session allowance so that nobody lives off the parties, a register and the means to write it, a short training and a periodic inspection. For the price of a single prison building, hundreds of chambers are set up and kept going for years. That is not an opinion: it is a comparison of lines of expenditure, and any engineer will redo it.

The yield, for its part, is counted otherwise. There is first the judge's time. If the small cases of neighbourhood, debts, animals in the field, boundary markers and partitions leave the docket, the court regains the room to judge what it alone can judge: blood, rape, the child, trafficking, public money. A judge who handles a thousand cases a year judges none of them; the same judge, with two hundred, becomes a judge again. That transfer does not cost a budget line: it frees one.

There is next the victim. Today, in the vast majority of our cases, she receives nothing: she wins a judgement she will never execute against a man who has nothing because he is in prison. Tomorrow, she receives a reparation negotiated before her own people and secured on a man who works. Between an enforceable title without a solvent debtor and six sacks of rice delivered at harvest, only an administration can prefer the former.

There is finally what cannot be counted but costs the most: peace. A land conflict badly closed does not remain a land conflict. It becomes a family grudge, then a village grudge, then, when a politician passes by, an ethnic grudge. We have paid that price in Côte d'Ivoire, and we know exactly what it costs: years of lost production, abandoned plantations, closed schools, deaths. Any institution that closes wounds while they are small is, from a strictly accounting point of view, the most profitable investment an African state can make.

So I do not ask for new spending. I ask for a shift of spending: fewer walls, more registers; fewer warders, more hearings; less detention before trial, more reparation executed. And I ask that the figures be published every year, so that we can be contradicted if we are wrong.

X. To the jurists, and to the young who enter the law

I now address those of my brothers who have studied law, and who I know will start at this declaration. I worked nineteen years alongside the courts as a sworn expert; I know their language and I respect their profession. That is why I speak to them without contempt.

Their first objection is the best: equality before the law. If every village judges according to its custom, two men guilty of the same act will receive two different treatments, and that is the end of law. I answer two things. First, the equality spoken of is already a fiction: in our countries, the man who has a lawyer, a telephone and a

cousin at the prosecutor's office is not judged like the man who has nothing, and everyone knows it. Next, what I propose is not the abandonment of the law: it is a limited, framed, controlled jurisdiction, with recourse open before the state judge on four precise grounds. It is not less law: it is law that at last reaches those it did not reach.

Their second objection is right too: custom has oppressed women, the younger and strangers. I wrote it myself in the ninth chapter of the first part, softening nothing. But I point out this: what I write here is the only proposal that imposes, as a condition of its existence, the presence of women in the chamber, the total exclusion of witchcraft, the right of recusal and the limited term. Leaving custom outside did not reform it: it went on judging, without witness and without recourse, in the chief's courtyard. One does not correct what one refuses to see.

Their third objection is professional: who will plead? I answer that the lawyer has more to do in this system than in the old one. Jurists will be needed to train the chambers, to check the registers, to bring the appeals, to attack extorted agreements, to defend the widow against a custom that would set her aside. Botswana, which has had customary courts sitting for sixty years, does not have fewer jurists: it has jurists who are of some use in the villages.

And I say to the young, to those who leave the faculty with a code under their arm: the worksite of your generation is not to recite a law written elsewhere for societies that never spoke it. It is to write ours. To collect the customs before the elders die, as I asked for the languages; to compare what the kgotla, the gada, the xeer and the palaver hut did; to build an African doctrine of reparation that

bears comparison with any doctrine in the world. That work has scarcely been done, and it is only waiting for hands.

I remind them finally that the restorative justice the West has been rediscovering for thirty years, which it teaches in its universities and now exports in pilot programmes, bears another name among us: it is called the palaver, and our grandfathers practised it under a tree while they were being declared primitive. We therefore have nothing to borrow on this ground. We have only to stop being ashamed.

What this declaration institutes

So that this should depend neither on a mood nor on one man, I fix in twelve points the position of the Bwa Sacré, valid until a later declaration, signed with the same seal, amends it.

First point. Kamite justice is a justice of reparation: it seeks what has been broken and what must be laid down to close it, not what a culprit deserves.

Second point. The victim is at the centre. No settlement is closed until she has received what is due to her.

Third point. Closure is real. What is settled is not reopened, is no longer held against anyone, and is not entered against the man for the rest of his life.

Fourth point. Confinement is not our penalty. We support everywhere penalties of reparation, work and restitution, with detention reserved for real danger.

Fifth point. No one is judged by a man he has not accepted. Recusal is a matter of right.

Sixth point. The palaver is public, in the language of the place, and free for the parties.

Seventh point. The Bwa Sacré institutes the palaver chamber as described in the fourth chapter of the third part: mixed composition, limited jurisdiction, a written and sealed register, recourse before the state judge, members paid an allowance and forbidden to receive anything from the parties.

Eighth point. Women sit. No case of inheritance, widowhood or family violence is judged without them, and no custom invoked may deprive a widow, a daughter or a wife of her rights.

Ninth point. No palaver chamber hears an accusation of witchcraft, receives it, or founds anything on it.

Tenth point. Blood, rape, harm to children and trafficking belong to the state judge and to him alone.

Eleventh point. On the land, custom establishes the facts and reconciles; the state registers, guarantees and protects the weak. The rights of women and of newcomers are entered in the same register and with the same force.

Twelfth point. The Bwa Sacré offers its chambers, its registers and its neutrality to the states that wish to use them, without anything in return, and withdraws as soon as it is no longer wanted.

Closing

We have no word for prison because we had no need of one. This is not a gap: it is a decision, taken long ago, by peoples who had understood that a man cut off is a loss to all and that a wound badly closed returns in the next generation. From Kurukan Fuga to the kgotla, from the gada to the xeer, from the palaver hut to the council of the daughters of the lineage, our societies built institutions that judged without confining, condemned without excluding, and ended with a meal.

They were declared primitive, they were driven from the courthouses, and in their place was put a system we have never had the means to make work. The result is before our eyes: prisons full of untried men, victims who have received nothing, villages that no longer speak to one another, and cases that last longer than the men.

There is no question of going backwards: there is a question of putting back in its place what was shown the door, and of giving it what it lacked — writing, control, and a place for women and the young. Burkina has just opened the way; Côte d'Ivoire has already proved it on the land; Botswana has been doing it for sixty years without anyone being troubled. What we propose is therefore not a utopia: it is the generalisation of what already works.

To states, we offer a mechanism they can take, correct and make their own. To chieftaincies, we offer a status on condition that they accept control. To the Kamites, we offer what our elders left us and what we were ashamed to bring out. And to those who still make

war on one another in our countries, we offer a tree, a hearing, a register — and someone who is of no camp.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré
BAZURU
Abidjan, September 13, 2026

– Chapter XII –

Kamite, Come Back to the Fold

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré on the welcome of those who return, on the brotherhood of Black people beyond the religions and the borders drawn by others, and on the only thing we forbid: getting oneself killed

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition – original French edition:
Kamite, reviens au bercail

Preliminary note

In recent days I have published what we are, what we defend, and what we answer to those who attack us. The hardest part was missing: what do we do with our own brothers who have left? A Black man is a Black man. He is one even if he prays in a mosque, even if he sings in a church, even if he believes in nothing. The day he wants to come back to the fold, what is he told? What is asked of him? What is he made to pay?

This declaration answers that question, and it answers it by instituting – that is, by fixing a rule that no one will afterwards be able to twist according to his mood or his personal grievances.

In it I speak of myself more than I am accustomed to. It is not by taste. It is that I am, in this matter, the most convenient example I have at hand: my own house has travelled the road, it has changed country five times, it has changed religion twice, and I have come back. If the man who presides over the Kamites is himself descended from a convert and from a migrant, then no one can be turned away from our door for having been one.

Three precautions, as always. I attack no religion: I state our own rules, and nothing more. I attack no believer: he who prays sincerely is in no way my adversary. And I compare no suffering to any other. The verifiable references are at the end of the volume.

PART ONE

Where we come from

The road of a single house, from Koumbi Saleh to Abidjan: five countries, two imported religions, and the question nobody dares to ask

I. Five countries, one family

I shall begin with my house, since it is the one I know best and the one I can prove piece by piece.

The most distant thing my lineage remembers is Koumbi Saleh. Today it is a field of stones in the south-east of Mauritania. Walls have been excavated there, stone houses, a great dead city. It was, in all likelihood, the capital of the empire the Arabs called Ghana and we called Wagadu. We left it. Then there was Guinea, in the Mandé, the country our names and our oaths come from. Then there was Mali. Then there was what is today Burkina Faso: it is there that my forefather Sounlé, born around 1812, settled around 1834, foun-

ded his village and took root, down to my great-grandfather, born in 1912, who remained Bwa until his death.

Until the war against the coloniser, we were in Burkina: it had been our country since Sounlé, for four generations. Then that war was lost – by treachery, not for want of fighting –, and the house fell back towards the south.

That is how my grandfather found himself in Côte d'Ivoire, at Kolia, between Kouto and Boundiali; then he wandered as far as Ouangolodougou. My father, for his part, settled in Gagnoa: that is where my brothers and I were born and grew up. And I, today, am settled in Abidjan, where I write this.

Do the count. Mauritania. Guinea. Mali. Burkina Faso. Côte d'Ivoire. Five present-day states for a single family, and not one of these displacements was a pleasure trip: each time it was war, the raid, or the victor settling in.

So I put the question I promised to put, and I put it coldly, because it alone settles half of our quarrels: **if these five countries go to war with one another, which one do I choose?**

I cannot answer, and nobody in my situation can. Each of these five countries holds a piece of my house. Burkina is the land of Sounlé and of my great-grandfather, the land where our dead are buried. Côte d'Ivoire is the country that took in my grandfather, at Kolia and then at Ouangolodougou; my father settled in Gagnoa, where my brothers and I were born and grew up; and I currently live in Abidjan. Mali is where I practised my profession for nineteen years. Guinea is the Mandé, where our names and our oaths come from.

And Mauritania is Koumbi Saleh, our oldest memory, today a field of stones.

To choose one against the others would be to choose against myself. He who asks me to name a camp is asking me, without knowing it, to say which of my dead does not count.

Now what I have just described is not my particular case: it is the case of half the continent. Ask around you, seriously, going back only four generations, and you will see the same thing appear: a house that crosses three or four present-day countries, two or three languages, and often two religions. We are a people of roads, and our roads are older than the lines that were drawn over us.

From this I draw a rule, and it is the first of this declaration: **the Kamite does not choose a camp against another Kamite.** Neither between two states, nor between two regions, nor between two religions into which our brothers have been poured by history. This is not softness: it is objectivity. One does not ask a man to cut his own lineage into five pieces and throw four of them away.

II. What the border has made of us

It must be said where these lines come from, because many of the young believe they are natural.

They were drawn in Berlin, between November 15, 1884 and February 26, 1885, by men who had never set foot in our country, around a table at which no African sat. They shared out the continent according to what each could hold. Then, in 1964, in Cairo, the newly independent African states decided to keep these lines exactly as they were. They had a good reason: to reopen every

border at the same time was general war. But the result is there: we have inherited, and we have sworn to keep, divisions made against us.

These lines run through the middle of peoples. The Bwa are on both sides of the border between Mali and Burkina. The Senufo are in Mali, in Burkina and in Côte d'Ivoire. The Yoruba are in Nigeria and in Benin. The Somali are in four states. The Hausa, the Fulani, the Mandinka, the Kongo: all cut in two. A man who crosses the bridge becomes a foreigner without having changed language, family or ancestors.

And that is where the word that has cost us the most comes from: *allochtone*, the allochthon. The man from here, the man from over there. The autochthon and the outsider. My grandfather was an allochthon in Côte d'Ivoire. My father was born there. I am Ivorian by a certificate of nationality I had to produce, like so many others. But in the mouth of the man who wishes harm, four generations are never enough: there will always be someone to say that your grandfather came from elsewhere. That reasoning, pushed to its end, expels everyone from everywhere, for there is not a single family on this continent that has not moved.

And it is true: my grandfather came from elsewhere. Only, let us look at the dates together. Côte d'Ivoire, as a state, has existed since 1960. My grandfather, for his part, was already being knocked about in the hands of the colonists from 1934 – that is, a quarter of a century before the country he is reproached with not belonging to even existed.

And there is better. By a decree of September 5, 1932, the colony of Upper Volta was purely and simply abolished, and the greater

part of its territory attached to Côte d'Ivoire – precisely to supply hands for the plantations of the south. It was not re-established until 1947. For fifteen years, the country of my fathers *was* Côte d'Ivoire, on the paper of the very men who held the paper.

So what does it mean, for a man of my house, "to have come from elsewhere"? My grandfather crossed no border: it is the border that was moved over him, twice, in offices where he had no voice. He was made Ivorian without being asked, then Voltaic without being asked, then a foreigner without being asked. And today he is expected to answer for a displacement of which he was never the author.

I ask no state to undo its borders: that would be irresponsible, and it is not my role. I say something else, and it is our own affair: **these lines do not command our brotherhood.** They command customs, taxes and elections. They do not command whom I recognise as my brother. The Economic Community of West African States admitted as much as early as 1979 by instituting the free movement of persons: what our fathers did without permission ended up being written into a protocol.

Let the Kamite remember this: when you are told "that man is not from here", ask only since when, and you will see the argument collapse by itself.

III. How a Kamite becomes something else

Now, the real question. How did our brothers become Muslims or Christians? If this question is answered badly, everything else is false, for they will be treated as guilty.

Look at my house again, for it tells the whole story. My great-grandfather remained Bwa all his life: he never knew Côte d'Ivoire, he died at home, with his fetishes. My grandfather took a church and made the migration with the coloniser. My father, growing up, took another. I bear a baptismal name. Three generations, and the house had changed religion twice without anyone, ever, having held an assembly to debate a doctrine.

That is not a conversion: it is a consequence. I am going to name the mechanisms, because they are known and they can be verified.

The first is war. Four times in a thousand years, the blade has passed through our country.

And I want to be heard here, for we have too often been described as people who run: **we have never left a land without having given battle.** In a thousand years, nobody has managed to convert us, and it is not because we had fast legs: it is because we fought every time, and we cost dearly. Let it be asked elsewhere what became of the peoples who did not hold: in North Africa, in Spain, in half of southern Europe, nothing of them remains – neither the masks, nor the rites, nor the names. We still have our masks, our custom and our dead named over ten generations. That is not obtained by fleeing.

The departure came after the fight, when the position could no longer be held, and it was done in order: one carried away what had to survive – the children, the old who knew, the objects of worship – and one set off further on to begin again. A withdrawal after battle is not a flight: it is the last manoeuvre of those who have decided that their people will go on existing.

Others could not do it. Too old, too numerous, surrounded, or simply overtaken: many wanted to leave and had no time. Those died, or they submitted. The result can be seen today on the map, and it calls for no comment: from Mauritania to Guinea and Mali, these are the descendants of those who could not leave. I absolutely refuse that they be called traitors: they are the defeated, and one does not reproach the defeated with having been defeated. They are people who saved their children with the only means left to them.

The second is the school. For two generations, over a large part of the continent, the school was run by a mission. For the child to read and write, he had to be baptised or to attend. That was the price of the ticket. Parents paid that price, and I do not know one parent who would have done otherwise.

The third is the civil register. The name written on the paper was given by the man who kept the register. Millions of us today bear the first name of a saint or of a Companion because an official wrote what he knew. My own first name comes from there.

The fourth is hunger and work. People went where there was work, and the work was often held by a network – a brotherhood, a parish, a merchant community. Whoever enters the network enters the cult; it is mechanical, it has nothing to do with theology.

The fifth is marriage. Under other skies, it is required that the wife be of the husband's religion. One generation later, the whole house has changed.

The sixth is shame. It is the most effective. Our parents were taught, at school as in the sermon, that what their fathers did was called fetishism, witchcraft, animism; that they were in darkness. A man

accepts many things, but not to be an object of contempt before his own children. Many let go, not out of conviction, but so that their sons would have a place in the world that was coming.

There are the six. Not one of them is a moral fault. Tell me which one, in the place of the man who lived it, you would have refused.

IV. The brother who left is not a traitor

I therefore write, and I want it to be cited against whoever would say the contrary in our name: **that one of our brothers who practises a revealed religion has committed no crime against the Kamites.**

He has not sold. He has not betrayed. In the vast majority of cases he has not even decided anything: he was born into what a forefather accepted one day of famine, of fear or of war. To reproach him with that is to reproach a man with the place of his birth.

I want to be plainer still, because I know what words circulate among us when anger rises. There are Kamites who say that the converts are lost, that they are the enemy within, that they must be kept at a distance. That word is false and it is dangerous. It is false, because it attributes to a man the decision of his great-grandfather. It is dangerous, because it does exactly what we reproach others with: it cuts Black people into the pure and the impure, and it prepares, among us this time, the same machinery of exclusion that we have suffered.

And I go all the way, since it is my house that serves as the example: the convert of my family is my grandfather. The migrant is he too. If the convert is a traitor, then the President of the Kamites is the

grandson of a traitor, and the son of another. I do not accept it: not for myself, and therefore not for others. What holds for me holds for all, otherwise it is not a rule, it is a privilege.

I say the contrary, to all those who are in this case, and they are hundreds of millions: your lineage has not been erased. Your ancestors are still your ancestors. They did not leave you because a forefather entered a mosque or a church. One does not get struck off a bloodline.

PART TWO

Why return is possible among us

No apostasy, no excommunication, no renunciation to sign: the Kamite door has never had a lock, and here is why

I. There is no apostasy among us

Here is our rule, and it stands in one line: **one cannot leave our house, therefore one does not have to re-enter it.**

We have no membership, so we have no striking off. We have no profession of faith, so we have nothing to renounce. We have no clergy, so nobody has the power to cut you off from the assembly. We have no hell, so we have no threat to hang over the one who goes away. And we have no paradise to promise, so we have nothing to sell you to make you stay.

What we have is three things: nature, the ancestors, tolerance. Look at them one by one, and you will see that none of the three can be lost.

Nature did not leave you while you were elsewhere. The tree remained the tree, the water remained the water, the earth went on bearing. You do not need to re-register for the rain to fall on you.

The ancestors did not leave you either. This is the capital point, and I shall come back to it: your ancestors are not a community from which you have been struck off. They are the men and women you came out of. Nobody on earth has the power to separate you from them. Even the man who has spent his whole life elsewhere carries them in every one of his cells.

As for tolerance, it is precisely what makes return possible. A house that has put nobody out of the door needs no ceremony of readmission.

I therefore say plainly what this means for the one who hesitates: there will be no inquiry into the years you spent elsewhere. There will be no public confession. There will be no renunciation to pronounce, no object to burn before witnesses, no declaration to sign, no name to change, no fine, no entry fee, and not a single franc to pay to anyone whatsoever. Whoever demanded one of these things of you in our name would be lying to you, and this declaration is your proof.

II. Each addresses his own ancestors

I must now explain the mechanism of our tolerance, because those who are not of our house do not understand it, and because it is what makes us a federation rather than a religion.

Among us, each addresses *his own* ancestors. Not mine. His. I make sacrifices to my ancestors: how does that concern you? You have yours. You speak to them as your house has always done, with the words of your house, in your language, according to your calendar. We are not called to believe the same thing: we are called to do, each of us, the same thing towards our own.

Understand what this produces. Where there is a single god and a single revelation, one must necessarily be right and the other wrong, and the discussion can never stop until one of the two has given way. Among us there is nothing to decide between. Your ancestors are not in competition with mine. They dispute no territory. Neither needs the other to disappear. That is why we can be, in the same assembly, Bwa, Dogon, Bamanan, followers of vodun, of bwiti, Yoruba, Kongo — and have no ground for religious war. Our unity is not a common doctrine: it is a common way of treating one's own.

And that is why there can be no apostasy: to apostatise, there would have to be a dogma to leave. There is none. There is only your lineage, and your lineage has not repudiated you.

I add what I have already said elsewhere and which deserves to be said again here: science has proved us right on this precise point. DNA is in every cell of your body. Today the line of the mothers can be traced back through mitochondrial DNA, and the line of the

fathers through the Y chromosome. That means, in ordinary language, that your ancestors are physically in you, that they remained there through all your years of absence, and that nothing you said, believed or preached in the meantime has erased them. We were right before we could prove it: that is all I note.

And from this I draw the argument that closes the debate on diversity: if the Creator made DNA, he himself made diversity, since it is DNA that produces different peoples, faces and languages. We therefore have no problem with diversity: we are not in the business of correcting the work of the one who made the world.

III. We ask no one to leave his faith

This is the point that will be least well understood, so I shall write it as slowly as possible.

We do not ask the brother who returns to leave his religion. We do not ask it of him on the first day, and we shall not ask it of him in the tenth year.

A man can pray on Friday and honour his ancestors. A man can go to mass on Sunday and pour water at the door of his father's house. Does that seem impossible to you? It is already done, every day, in millions of African homes, and everyone knows it very well in secret. What I am doing here is putting an end to the hypocrisy: I say that among us, this has never been a problem.

I have seen it at home. A Bwa woman can go to her village to offer a chicken to her ancestors to thank them for a child, or to ask for one. Her husband will see nothing abnormal in it. He will not even realise that, under other skies, this is the subject of very grave

disputes, and that it is taught there that the wife must follow the religion of her husband. He has his fetishes, and he compels nobody, not even his wife. That is maximum tolerance: it is so natural that one does not even notice one is practising it.

I therefore sum up in one formula what we ask of the one who returns: **we do not ask him to come without his God; we ask him to come without his camp.**

The difference is entire. His faith is his own affair; it concerns only him and those to whom he addresses it. His camp, on the other hand, concerns us all: it is what makes a Black man, one day, take sides against another Black man because a preacher or a party asked him to. That, we do not accept inside the house. Let him come and sit down without his quarrel, and there will be no difficulty.

And I add, for the prudent: the one who returns does not have to announce it. We keep no public list, we make no declaration in his place, we do not expose him where he works or where he prays. Discretion is a right, and I have instituted it for all. Many of us have a job, a family, a neighbourhood; some live in countries where returning would cost dearly. We shall never require a man to risk his position to please us.

IV. What we shall never do

Since I am instituting a welcome, I must institute its limits at the same time, otherwise zealous men will make something else of it in ten years.

First, we shall never proselytise. We shall not go looking for people at the doors of mosques or churches. We shall run no campaign of

reconversion, we shall not count “returns” as one counts trophies, and we shall open no competition with anyone whatsoever. I say it bluntly: we refuse to do to others what was done to us. The day we started recruiting, we would become what we reproach.

Second, we shall never insult the religion in which our brother was raised. It is very often that of his mother. To insult a man’s religion is to insult his mother, and whoever does that among us does not speak in the name of the Bwa Sacré. We criticise doctrines, practices, wars: never persons, never the faith of a man at prayer.

Third, we shall never shame the one who returns. No public account of his years away, no humiliating testimony, no repentance before the assembly. Shame is the tool that made us leave; we shall not use it to make people come back.

Fourth, we shall never ask for money. Nothing to enter, nothing to be recognised, nothing to be entered in the register, nothing to be presented to the Ancestors. Whoever demands a franc in our name is a swindler, and it must be said aloud: we have seen enough of what a spirituality that sends invoices produces.

Fifth, we shall never touch children without their parents. No child is presented, enrolled or committed without the consent of those who have charge of him. Our children are not a field of conquest.

Sixth, we shall never judge a brother by his appearance. Neither the name, nor the clothing, nor the beard, nor the veil, nor the cross, nor the language he speaks better than ours, nor his accent, nor his passport. We have already been judged by all of that; we know what it is worth.

PART THREE

How we welcome

What is asked, what is not asked, what is done and in what order — and the only thing the Bwa Sacré forbids

I. Three questions, and not one more

Here then is the welcome, as I institute it. When a brother presents himself, he is asked only three questions.

The first: who are your fathers? This is not an examination. It is an invitation. Say what you know, even if it is little — a name, a village, a region, a language your grandmother spoke. If you know nothing at all, that is not an obstacle: the third chapter of this part is written for you.

The second: do you come in peace with your brothers? That is to say: are you ready to sit beside a man who does not pray as you do, who does not vote as you do, who comes from the opposite

camp, and not to reopen the quarrel here? That is the only thing we truly require.

The third: do you wish to be presented to your own? And the answer may be no, or not now, without anything changing in the welcome.

That is all. Three questions. There is no fourth, and above all not these, which I expressly forbid: a man is not asked what his religion is; he is not asked whether he has stopped practising it; he is not asked what he did while he was elsewhere; he is not asked why he returns now and not sooner; he is not asked what his parents did; and he is not asked to prove anything whatsoever by a paper.

This last prohibition is not a matter of style. Paper has served, among us, to exclude: our forefathers were subjects without civil status, not through the negligence of their families, but because the law of the victor did not recognise their right to exist on a register. A house that has suffered from paper will not start demanding it at the door.

One reservation, and it is not a matter of form: these three questions hold in ordinary times, in a place at peace. Where war is under way, where villages are emptying and people are being killed, the welcome is done according to the rules of safety fixed in the fifth chapter of this part, and those rules come before everything else. Not questioning a man about his faith has never meant opening the door without looking at who is knocking.

II. The return: what is done, and in what order

There must be a gesture, all the same. Men need a gesture; a thing that has no form does not exist. But this gesture must be light, otherwise it will become one more barrier.

Here it is, in four stages, and I state at the outset that it lasts no longer than an afternoon.

First stage: the word. The brother says, before those who are present, who he is and whom he comes from. Nothing else. No conversion narrative, no confession, no tears demanded. If he can say only one sentence, one sentence is enough.

Second stage: the presentation. This is the central act: he is presented to his ancestors, not to ours. An elder of his house, if there is one, performs it; failing that, an elder of the place performs it for him, naming him and naming what he knows of his lineage. It is a presentation, not an initiation: nobody receives a secret that day, nobody swears an oath, nobody commits himself to anything for the future. I specify, because it is my own case and it is in no way exceptional: one can be presented at any age. My own parents did not present me, out of a prudence inherited from a time when being seen on the side of the elders could cost one's life. I shall have myself presented, and I have written it in our texts. The man who is sixty is not late.

Third stage: the meal. We eat together. This is not a detail: among us, every closed matter ends with a meal, and the matter is closed only when one has eaten. The meal says, without words, that nothing remains owed.

Fourth stage: the entry in the register, if he wants it. What was said is written down: the name, the lineage as he gave it, the place, the date, and the witnesses. He keeps a copy. The register is not there for us; it is there for his children, who will no longer have to reconstruct in thirty years what he still knew. I said it about justice and I say it again here: writing, among us, is the protection of the weak. And if he refuses to be entered, he is not entered.

That is all. A word, a presentation, a meal, a line. Whoever adds a fifth stage adds his own power to it: let it be refused him.

III. The man who does not know his genealogy

I come to those for whom this declaration matters most: the millions of Kamites who can name no ancestor. The children of the deportation, whose names were erased on purpose. Those of the great cities, whose parents cut the tie deliberately to enter the new world. The orphans. The adopted. Those whose village burned.

I tell them first something nobody tells them: **not to know one's ancestors is not to have none.** They exist, whether they are named or not. The ignorance in which we were placed is a crime of those who organised it; it is not a defect of the one who suffers it.

Next, we have a solution, and it is as old as we are. When a man does not know his genealogy, he presents himself all the same: he goes before the fetish and spits on it to present himself. It is safer. That sounds harsh, put like that, to ears that are not of our house, so I explain. Spittle is the breath and the water of the body: it is what a man has that is most personal, which he can neither borrow nor

counterfeit. He who cannot give a name gives his breath. And he is presented, because he has given himself for want of being able to cite those he comes from. Our old people had provided for the case of the man without memory, and they did not leave him outside.

And I add what our time allows, for I am not a man of the past. DNA can today give back to many what the slave trade took from them: a region, a group of peoples, sometimes a precise maternal line. It is not magic and one must not expect a village name from it; but for a man who was never told anything, to know from which coast and from which family of peoples he comes is already immense. Let whoever wants to do it, knowing what he is buying: an indication, not a birth certificate. And let him be careful to whom he entrusts what is most intimate to him; our bodies are not merchandise.

Finally, there exists among us a thing that has been forgotten and that I restore to honour: a house can receive a man into its lineage. It has always been done, for ransomed captives, for settled strangers, for children taken in. He who has no house can therefore be received into one, with the agreement of the elders of that house, and from then on he bears its ancestors. I say it to the children of the diaspora in particular: you are not condemned to remain outside for want of archives. There are houses here that will receive you, and I stand guarantor for it.

IV. The man who returns and leaves again

This case must be settled now, for it will arise, and the way it is treated says everything about a house.

A man will return, stay two years, and leave again. He will be caught up by his family, by his wife, by his pastor, by his fear, or simply by the fact that he will not have found among us what he was looking for. What is done to him?

Nothing. **Nothing is done.** No threat, no curse, no setting apart of his family, no rumour, no public reproach, no taking back of what he gave. And the day he returns again, he is not made to pay for his departure.

I know what will be objected: that would make us a house without requirements, where one enters and leaves as in a market. I answer that the closed door has never kept anyone: it has only made hypocrites, who stay inside no longer believing because they are afraid of what awaits them outside. I want none of that. I prefer a hundred free men who come back of their own accord to a thousand shut-in men who dare not say they left long ago.

And there is a deeper reason. We are a federation, not a church. A federation holds because each finds his account in it, not because the exit has been confiscated from him. The day the Bwa Sacré needs to threaten in order to keep its members, it will be because it has nothing left to offer them, and it will deserve to empty.

V. To welcome is not to surrender oneself

I come to the limit, and it is the only prohibition in this whole declaration. It is short: **it is forbidden to get oneself killed.**

It must be well understood why I write this in a text on welcome, and why I hold to it more than to all the rest.

Tolerance is our strength and it nearly became our tomb. We were taken because we were open. People came to us as guests, ate our food, learned our roads, and when the day came they used all of it against us. This is no hypothesis: it is the history of this continent, four times repeated for my lineage alone, from Koumbi Saleh to today.

And there is worse than being surprised. There is being surprised after having been warned. A sovereign of our own kind, knowing that invaders were coming, forbade his people to fight. The rest is known: a few dozen men undid an empire at Cajamarca because the empire had decided not to defend itself. I never want to hear that story among us again. It is the exact opposite of wisdom: it is not peace, it is abdication disguised as virtue.

And there is a more discreet way of dying, which I know from too close. It is called trust without prudence.

When the war came to us, in 1915 and 1916, we waged it. We did not suffer it: we waged it, and we waged it for a long time. What put an end to our resistance was not the worth of the adversary: it was that our base was pointed out. It was pointed out by people we let move freely among us, keep shop in our markets, come and go, when we knew that they served in the column opposite as auxiliaries of the coloniser. They recognised a horse in our market — a horse they had seen in battle. The rest deduced itself. Without that, this war would have lasted much longer, and it is not certain that we would have lost it.

I write this and I write at once what must accompany it, on pain of making it a weapon against innocents. **I accuse no people.** The chiefdoms employed as auxiliaries were employed by the man who

led the column; the people to which they belonged decided nothing, and it counts today, it too, among the first victims of the war that is beginning again. My lesson is not against men: it is about us. We knew the risk and we changed nothing in our habits, because our hospitality seemed to us more important than our security. We paid for that with the loss of a war and four generations of exile.

So I write this, and let no one distort it. We open the door to the brother. We do not open the door to the blade. He who comes to sit down is received without being made to pay for his years of absence; he who comes with the knife is no longer a brother returning, he is an aggressor, and he is treated as such. A man who presents himself to us in arms benefits from none of the rules of this declaration, because he has himself left the ground of the word.

And because people are being killed at this very moment, because villages are being emptied, because things are being done to women and children that I shall not describe here, I fix rules of safety, and they take precedence over everything I have written above about the gentleness of the welcome.

No one is received in arms, neither he nor those who accompany him, without exception and whatever his name.

No one is received in secret. The welcome takes place by day, before witnesses, and never by a single man. An assembly that receives someone at night, apart, without the others knowing, has already begun to die.

In a war zone, one receives outside the village, and one takes the time that is needed. No one is led to the place where the women, the children and the old are before time has done its work.

No Kamite assembly gives anyone whatsoever a place, a date, a headcount, a path, a list or a name. Those are the six things one comes looking for, never anything else. He who asks for them, were he in tears and were he our cousin, has designated himself.

He among us who vouches for a man vouches for him in earnest. There is no recommendation of complaisance; he who presents a man pledges his own name before the assembly.

Let no one come and tell me that these rules betray hospitality. They are the hospitality of people who have already been punished for having lacked it. One does not search a man's faith: one looks at his hands, one looks at who accompanies him, and one takes one's time. That costs the innocent nothing; it costs everything to the one who comes for something else.

The Kamite people must be able to gather and to defend itself. I have already instituted it and I confirm it here: we are at our fourth jihad, we know what it is, and there is no longer any question of dying politely. The day people want to exterminate us, or decide that their god has given them our land, there will be neither theological debate nor offering of our throats.

But I bound this as strictly as I affirm it, because a badly written permission makes more dead than the enemy. Defence is defensive: it protects lives and a place, it conquers nothing, it does not avenge, it does not punish a community for what one of its members has done. We create no militia, and we shall recognise none that claims to act in our name. Nobody uses security as a staircase to seize power over the Kamites: that would be the most classic reversal in history, and the Bazuru who tried to reign by that road would be disqualified by himself. And never, in any case, is a believer attacked

because he is a believer: our adversaries are those who take up arms, never those who pray.

Between being massacred and making war, there is the whole space of prudence: to count oneself, to warn one another, to regroup, to hold one's position as long as it holds, to make the attack costly, and to withdraw only in order, when one has decided to withdraw. Our fathers did that for a thousand years, and that is why I am alive to write. It was not flight: it was a long war, waged by people who knew that a land can be retaken and that a lost custom cannot. To submit is to renounce; to withdraw after having fought is to keep.

VI. All Black people are our brothers

I end with the general rule, the one from which all the rest follows: **a Black man is a Black man.**

He is one whether he prays or does not pray. He is one whether he is from the continent or from the diaspora, whether he speaks one of our languages or none, whether he lives in Bamako, in Kingston, in Salvador, in Paris or in Atlanta. He is one whether he agrees with me or not. This brotherhood is not earned and is not withdrawn: it is observed.

I know there are accounts between us. The children of the diaspora reproach us with having sold their ancestors; I have heard it a hundred times. I have already answered what I had to answer, and I maintain it as it stands: forgiveness asked, first and without condition, from my first book to this day. And then, the truth of the facts, said without arrogance: we who came from Ghana, pursued, our villages burned, had no time to sell anyone whatsoever; we were

trying to stay alive. These two sentences do not contradict each other. One can ask forgiveness for what was done by Africans, and say at the same time that our house was not among them. The refusal of that distinction is precisely what has prevented us from speaking to one another for two hundred years.

In the same way, there are accounts between states, between regions, between neighbouring peoples, and there will be more. The Kamite does not have to become the soldier of one against the other. I wrote it about the wars outside: when two elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers. That holds too, and first of all, for the wars within.

So let us return to my question of the first chapter, since it is the one that will have opened and closed this declaration. If Mauritania, Guinea, Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire go to war with one another, which one do I choose?

I choose my brothers. In all five.

That is not an evasion: it is the only answer a man can give without mutilating himself. And it is the answer I ask all Kamites to give with me, because it is the only one that leaves us standing and whole the day the drums begin again.

What this declaration institutes

So that the welcome should depend neither on a mood, nor on a place, nor on one man, I fix in twelve points the rule of the Bwa Sacré, valid until a later declaration, signed with the same seal, amends it.

First point. A Black man is a Black man. Kamite brotherhood is not earned, is not bought and is not withdrawn.

Second point. There is no apostasy among the Kamites. No one has left, no one therefore has to re-enter, and no one has the power to cut off another.

Third point. That one of our brothers who practises a revealed religion has committed no crime against the Kamites. To reproach him with it is forbidden in every assembly of the Bwa Sacré.

Fourth point. We ask no one to leave his faith. We ask him to come without his camp, not without his God.

Fifth point. In ordinary times, the welcome stands in three questions: whom do you come from; do you come in peace with your brothers; do you wish to be presented to your own? There is no fourth. In time of war, the rules of safety of the twelfth point come first.

Sixth point. The return is done in four stages: the word, the presentation to one's own, the meal, the entry in the register if he wants it. No one adds a fifth stage.

Seventh point. No renunciation, no public confession, no humiliation, no change of name and no payment may be demanded of the one who returns. Whoever demands them in our name is an impostor.

Eighth point. Presentation takes place at any age. He who was not presented as a child is not late, and he who does not know his genealogy is presented by his own breath.

Ninth point. A Kamite house may receive into its lineage the man who no longer has one, with the agreement of its elders. The children of the deportation will not remain outside for want of archives.

Tenth point. Discretion is a right. No return is published, declared or exposed without the will of the person concerned.

Eleventh point. He who leaves again goes freely and returns freely. No threat, no curse, no sanction follows a departure.

Twelfth point. It is forbidden to get oneself killed. No one is received in arms; no one is received in secret; no one obtains from a Kamite assembly a place, a date, a headcount or a path. Where war is under way, the welcome takes place outside the village, by day, before witnesses, and with the time that is needed. The door is open to the brother; it is never open to the blade. Our defence protects lives and a place: it conquers nothing, avenges nothing, creates no militia, and never attacks a man because he prays.

Closing

We have spent centuries defending ourselves, and we have got into the habit of counting those who are missing. It is time to count differently: not what we have lost, but what can come back.

What can come back is immense. It is hundreds of millions of men and women who bear our faces, our distorted names, our gestures at table, our ways of greeting the old, and who do not know that a house awaits them without calling them to account. They grew up believing that one does not come back, because all the houses they know have a door that closes behind you. Ours has never had one.

I therefore write it in black and white, so that it can be shown to the one who doubts: **brother, you can come back. Nothing you fear will be asked of you.** No renunciation, no confession, no money, no shame, no publicity. You will be asked whom you come from, whether you come in peace, and whether you wish to be presented. That is all. And if you do not know whom you come from, we provided for that too, a very long time ago.

My house has travelled five countries and two imported religions in four generations. My great-grandfather remained whole; my grandfather left; my father was born on the road; I have come back. None of this has erased our lineage: it went where it could, it survived, and it found the way back. That is exactly what I wish for all who will read this.

One last thing, and it is the only prohibition I leave behind me. Welcome the brother without rancour and without making him pay for his years of absence — but welcome him with prudence, and never let yourselves be killed. These two sentences do not contradict each other: the first says what is asked of a man, the second says how he is received. One does not search his faith; one looks at his hands. Our fathers held for a thousand years because they knew how to do both: open their door, and keep their weapon within reach. Do as they did. Neither the one without the other.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré

BAZURU

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

– Chapter XIV –

Kamite, Your Neighbour Is Your Brother

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré on the palaver between our states: reconciling Côte d'Ivoire with itself, reconciling the Alliance of Sahel States with its neighbours, and ceasing to let the neo-coloniser lap it up

Declaration of the Bwa Sacré to the peoples of Africa, of the continent and of the diaspora

KING BAZURU

President of the Bwa Sacré

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

English edition — original French edition:
Kamite, ton voisin est ton frère

Preliminary note

I published, not long ago, a declaration on African justice and on the instituted palaver. Rereading it, I saw that it stopped too soon. It settled the quarrels between neighbours of a village: the boundary stone moved, the animal that got into the field, the land cleared by one and claimed by the other. Yet we have today exactly the same quarrel, in the same words, on another scale: between our states. And nobody has noticed that the method which calms the first could calm the second.

This is therefore a sequel, and it is something else. African justice is not only a good way of judging men: it is a good door through which to reconcile a country with itself, and to reconcile brother countries that have begun to look at one another askance.

I must say at the outset what this declaration is not. It takes the side of no state, no government, no regional organisation, no regime. It names no head of state and passes judgement on the domestic politics of no country: I have made that a rule for myself, and I shall explain why it is not cowardice. It advises nobody to stay or to leave, to fight or to come to terms. Those are sovereign decisions, and it is right that they should be.

What it says lies elsewhere, and it is our own affair, we Kamites: whatever our states may do, **our neighbours remain our brothers**, and the one who profits from our quarrels is none of us. The verifiable references are at the end of the volume. The dated facts given there are public: anyone can check them.

PART ONE

Who profits from our quarrels

From slavery to neo-colonialism: the same hand, methods that change – and what it laps up when we fall out with one another

I. The coloniser has not changed; it is his strategy that changes

Let us begin with the thing that must be understood before all the others, without which we shall mistake our adversary for another century.

Our history is presented to us as a succession of separate periods: there was the slave trade, then there was colonisation, then there were the independences, and since then we have supposedly been masters in our own house. It is a convenient way of telling the story, because it makes one believe that each thing ended before the next began, and therefore that there is nothing left.

Look at it otherwise. There is one single thing, with one single object: to draw from this land and from these men the maximum at the minimum price. What has changed is not the object: it is the means, and it has changed every time it became too costly.

First the man himself was taken and sold elsewhere. That lasted for centuries. It stopped when it became costly: costly in ships, in revolts, in moral trials among those who were buying, and above all useless, since the man could henceforth be made to produce on the spot.

So he was left at home and fetched there: that is forced labour. It required an administration, a legal status to justify a man's having no rights – the *indigénat* – and a force to hold the country. Among us, that lasted until 1946. My own forebears were subjects without civil status, not because their family was negligent, but because the victor's law did not recognise their right to appear on a register.

Then holding the country became too expensive: it required civil servants, soldiers, roads, schools, and it required answering revolts. So the flag and the anthem were handed back, and the rest was kept: that is what is called neo-colonialism, and the word is not a slogan: it was forged by Africans themselves, in the early 1960s, to describe precisely that thing – formal sovereignty without economic sovereignty.

There is the one rule to remember, and it holds for the future: **the adversary abandons a means as soon as it becomes more expensive than the next, and never before.** He has never given anything up out of kindness. He has given it up out of calculation. That is why one must neither be surprised nor feel betrayed: it is a

mechanism, it is cold, and one understands it better as an engineer than as a moralist.

And that governs what follows. If the adversary calculates, then we must calculate too. An anger that costs nothing to the one who exploits us is not a strategy: it is a release. And a quarrel between us, which costs both of us and costs him nothing, is worse than a mistake: it is a gift.

II. The currency we do not make

I take the example everybody knows, and I treat it as a technician, without shouting.

The facts first. The franc of the French colonies of Africa was created on December 26, 1945. It was later called the franc of the African Financial Community for West Africa and the franc of Financial Cooperation in Central Africa. It is worth today, for both zones, 655.957 to one euro: a fixed parity, inherited from the peg to the French franc and carried over to the euro in 1999. It was devalued by half on January 11, 1994: overnight, everything that came from outside cost our parents twice as much, and nobody had asked their opinion.

The mechanism next. For decades, the central banks of the zone had to deposit a share of their foreign exchange reserves with the French Treasury, in a so-called operations account, in exchange for a guarantee of unlimited convertibility; and French representatives sat on their governing bodies. In December 2019, for West Africa, a reform was announced: an end to the obligation to centralise those reserves, the withdrawal of French representatives from the central

bank's bodies, and a change of name to come. The fixed parity and the guarantee, for their part, were maintained. For Central Africa, the old arrangement went on applying for longer.

Now the two readings, for they both exist and I shall not pretend otherwise.

Those who defend the system say: the fixed parity gives low inflation, a convertible currency, a guarantee that reassures lenders, and a stability that many neighbouring countries envy us. They are not lying: these effects are real and measurable.

Those who contest it say: a fixed parity with the currency of high-technology economies condemns our raw-material exports to being expensive; it forbids adjustment when our prices collapse; it deprives our states of the monetary tool; and a monetary policy one does not decide oneself is not a policy, it is a constraint. They are not lying either.

My position as a Kamite, I give it, and it is not the one expected. I do not tell a state what it must do with its currency: that is the most sovereign thing there is, and whoever gets it wrong will pay for it before his own people. I say two things only. The first: **a people that does not make its own currency is not yet entirely standing**, and the day will come when it will have to be made, prepared, guaranteed, and not in improvisation. The second, which matters more to me: **this question must never become a cause of quarrel between brothers.** The one who wants to leave quickly and the one who wants to leave slowly want the same thing. To treat them as enemies is to offer the adversary a victory he did not have to contest.

III. Leonine contracts

I speak here of what I know from the inside, since it has been my trade for thirty years and I have read these documents in detail.

A leonine contract is one in which one party takes the lion's share and the other bears the risk. Among us, this is almost never visible in the stated price: it is visible in the clauses, and one must be of the trade to read them. I name them, because it is good that the young should know where to look.

There is the stability clause, which freezes the project's tax regime for twenty or thirty years: if the country raises its taxes, the project stays at the old rate. A state that signs that ties its hands for a generation.

There are the exemptions, often total on imports, including on goods that could have been bought locally: the result is that the project buys nothing in the country and keeps no local workshop alive.

There is transfer pricing: the mine sells the ore to a sister company, set up elsewhere, at a price they fix between themselves. The profit appears where the tax is low, and the cost appears with us. Nothing is illegal; everything is organised.

There is the arbitration clause, which removes the dispute from the country's judge to entrust it to a private tribunal sitting abroad, in a language and according to usages that are not ours, and before which our states often lose — sometimes for sums that exceed their health budget.

There is, finally, the state's share: a minority stake, free of charge, without any real voting right, which gives a seat and not an ounce of power.

And it must be said at once, what nobody likes to hear: **these contracts were signed by Africans.** By our ministers, our directors, our legal advisers. Sometimes out of weakness in negotiation — on the other side there are twenty specialised lawyers and on ours two overworked civil servants; sometimes under pressure; sometimes for reasons that the justice of our countries will one day have to examine. To refuse to say so is to condemn ourselves to doing it again. The adversary proposes; it is we who sign.

The practical consequence is simple, and it costs almost nothing: the first liberation is not a speech, it is a room full of lawyers and engineers capable of reading a mining contract line by line. A country that trains thirty negotiators recovers more money than in ten years of declarations.

IV. The exploitation of man by man

We must come down from macroeconomics to the man, otherwise all this remains a drawing-room conversation.

Take cocoa, since I write from Abidjan. The planter bears everything: he buys the seedlings, he clears, he waits for years, he suffers the disease, the drought, the world price which he learns only at the moment it is announced to him. The price he receives for a kilo of beans bears no relation to what a bar sold in a shop in Europe is worth at the other end. Between the two, the value is created in processing: the grinding, the paste, the butter, the chocolate, the brand. And that value is created elsewhere. We

supply most of the world's beans and we process a modest share of them on the spot. The country exports weight; the others export brand.

Take gold. It is extracted here, refined elsewhere, priced elsewhere, stored elsewhere. The hole remains, the water is damaged, the village gets a school and a road, and the gold goes away. Take cotton: the fibre leaves, the thread comes back woven, and our tailors pay dearly for what our fathers grew.

And the man in all this? The building labourer paid by the day, without contract, without contributions, dismissed at the end of the month to be taken back the next day under another name; the child carrying a sack too heavy for him on a plantation whose owner is no richer than he is; the woman selling by the roadside twelve hours a day whose income counts in no statistic. That is the exploitation of man by man in its ordinary form. It is not only the doing of the foreigner: a part of it is practised by our own compatriots, and I do not excuse it any more because it is local.

I draw from this a rule of method that I believe more useful than indignation: **everything that moves one step up the chain is worth more than a whole speech.** A grinding workshop, a ginning unit, a refinery, a testing laboratory, an engineering office that does the study instead of buying it abroad: each of these things shifts a share of the value from the other side to ours. It is slow, it is technical, it is not glorious. Yet that is where liberation is really played out.

V. The old method: divide

I come to the principal tool, the one that made all the rest possible with very few people.

A few thousand men were never able to hold millions by force alone. They held because they knew how, everywhere, to find two groups with an old dispute and give a rifle to one of them. This is not a theory: it is a documented practice, described in administrators' reports, taught to new arrivals, and it served from the Sahel to the Great Lakes.

It took several forms. Peoples were classified: the warlike and the peaceable, the intelligent and the backward, those to be put in the army and those to be put in the fields. Chiefs were invented where there were none, so as to have an interlocutor who signs; and the real ones were deposed when they refused. Lines were drawn through the middle of peoples. Labour migrations were organised from one region to another, and then the question of who was at home was left on the spot, for ever. And the grid of the good pupil and the bad pupil was invented, which still works today: one is respectable and receives the credits, the other is disreputable and receives the sanctions, and the list is changed as needs require.

What ought to strike us is the economy of the procedure. It requires almost no expense. It is enough to keep a suspicion alive. Once the suspicion is installed, it is the brothers themselves who do the work, free of charge, with conviction, and for generations.

And I want this to be heard clearly, for it is the heart of this declaration: **we no longer need anyone to divide us; we have learned to do it ourselves.** It is the only thing colonisation ever really taught

us, and we learned it too well. The proof is that the same words come back every time a difficulty arises: that one is not from here, that one is an agent, that one has sold out, that one is working for them.

VI. Lapping it up

There is an expression among us for saying that a man delights in what happens to others: he laps it up. I am going to describe very concretely how he is served.

Two neighbouring countries fall out. The first closes something, the second responds, the newspapers flare up, the networks join in. What happens, mechanically, in the days that follow?

Trade between the two falls. The lorries wait. The goods perish. The price rises for both populations, and it rises more for the poorest. The merchandise, for its part, keeps arriving: only it now arrives from further away, bought elsewhere and paid for in foreign currency. There is already a winner, and it is neither the one nor the other.

Next, each of the two looks for support. Now support is not free: it is paid for in contracts, in bases, in votes, in access. Each gives, in order to be backed against his brother, what he refused to give when he was not afraid. Second winner, and it is the same one.

Next, the budget shifts. What was meant for the dispensary and the road goes to the border apparatus. The two countries grow poorer at the same time, by exactly the same gesture.

Next, the men pay. The trader who lived from the crossing, the herdsman who had followed the rain since time began, the student enrolled on the other side, the family cut in two by a line drawn in Berlin. Those people will never read the communiqué: they will bear its whole weight.

And meanwhile, very far away, a man reads a report and notes that the file is progressing by itself. He has had nothing to do. He has not even had to lie. It was enough for him to wait.

So I say it in the simplest terms I have, and I should like this sentence to leave the book and circulate on its own: **every time two African countries fall out, someone elsewhere is lapping it up, and it is neither of us.**

VII. What we shall not say

I must now set the limits of what I have just written, because a text like this one can serve very bad ends if it is left without a safeguard.

We shall never say that an African who disagrees with us is an agent of the foreigner. It is the most convenient accusation in the world: it cannot be proved, it cannot be refuted, and it has served everywhere to silence honest men. Whoever uses it is not arguing: he is liquidating.

We shall never say that a neighbouring state is somebody's servant. A state has constraints that its own citizens do not all know: deadlines, creditors, neighbours, an army to pay at the end of the month. To judge from outside in two sentences is the luxury of the one who has nothing to sign.

We shall never say that everything that happens to us comes from outside. It is false and it is paralysing. A considerable part of our misfortunes comes from our own decisions: contracts signed with full knowledge, public money diverted, posts handed out to the family, elections arranged, public services left to rot. A man who attributes everything to the external enemy has nothing left to correct at home: it is very restful, and it is the best guarantee of never getting out.

We shall name no head of state, neither to praise him nor to condemn him. We shall take no side in an election, a coup, a transition or a trial. And we shall never insult a neighbouring people for what its government has done: the people is not the government, and that holds for them as for us.

Finally, we shall never speak of the foreigner as of a race. The adversary I describe in this part is not a people, nor a colour, nor a religion: it is an interest, served by institutions and by men of every origin, including our own. To confuse the interest with a people is to reproduce exactly the wrong that was done to us, and it is moreover an error of analysis: one does not fight effectively what one has misidentified.

PART TWO

Different methods, one single objective

Confrontation, collaboration, patience: three strategies for the same liberation — and why I never meddle in the domestic politics of our states

I. Why I do not meddle in your domestic affairs

I am often reproached for it, so I shall explain myself once and for all, and afterwards we shall not return to it.

I preside over the Kamites. The Kamites are in some fifteen countries of the continent and on four continents. They vote in different systems, they live under different regimes, they hold opposite opinions about their own governments, and they are sometimes in two camps within the same country. The day I take sides in an

election somewhere, I lose half of my own in that country, and above all I lose the only thing I possess: **the fact of belonging to no camp.**

It is not a comfortable position: it is a costly one. I am accused of lukewarmness, I am told I ought to choose, I am explained that to keep silent is complicity. I answer that whoever wants to reconcile cannot have a camp, and that if I want to be able one day to ask two brothers to sit down, neither of them must be able to say to me: you were against me in such-and-such a year.

That is exactly the role certain men had among us, and I have already described it: the chief who commands nothing, who has no land, no army, no sentence to hand down, and who serves only to make acceptable a peace that honour forbade anyone to propose first. His strength came entirely from his apparent uselessness. The day he had an interest in the matter, nobody would have called on him any more.

I add a harder reason. I have seen enough men come to office to know what happens there. The one who criticised everything discovers, once inside, that there are creditors, a calendar, an army to pay, a neighbour to handle carefully, commitments made by others before him which he cannot tear up without consequences. He understands. Almost all of them end by understanding. But he understands at the moment when he is already too far committed to draw back.

That is why I prefer to speak to men rather than to powers, and to speak of what lasts rather than of what passes. Governments change; peoples remain; borders between brothers are a recent accident. My work is on the side of what remains.

II. Too close to the event horizon

I want to develop this point, for it explains many things that are wrongly taken for bad faith.

Physicists call the event horizon the boundary around a black hole beyond which nothing can come back: neither an object, nor a light, nor a piece of information. What crosses it does not come out again. And the detail that interests me is this: **the one who crosses it feels nothing as he passes.** There is no wall, no shock, no signal. One has crossed, and one does not know it.

It is exactly so in human affairs. A man takes power with clear ideas. He signs a first commitment because he has no choice that month. He signs a second to finance the first. He makes a concession to obtain a delay, then another to hold the previous concession. At no moment has he felt anything whatever. Then one day he looks behind him and there is no path left: every step back would cost more than he has to spend. He understands at last what he was told before; he even understands it better than those who told him; and he can no longer do anything with it.

That is why I do not shout at men in power. Many of them have understood. The tragedy is not that they did not understand: it is that they understood too late, too close to the line.

But I draw the useful lesson from it, and it is to the young that I give it, for it is to them that it is of use: **everything is played out before the horizon, never after.** It is before that one reads the contract. It is before that one trains the negotiators. It is before that one builds the workshop that will spare us from buying. It is before that one is reconciled with one's neighbour, while the quarrel is still an

annoyance and not a war. Once the line is crossed, the best intentions in the world are no longer of any use, and neither are the most courageous speeches.

And that holds for quarrels between states too. A quarrel has a window. So long as it is within the window, a word, an envoy, a gesture suffice. Past the window, it will take years, deaths and a generation. We are, at this very moment, within the window. That is why I am writing now and not in five years.

III. Direct confrontation

Let us come to methods, since that is where we tear one another apart.

There are those who break. They denounce, they send away, they take back, they close, they change partners. It makes noise, it rouses the crowds, and it produces immediate and visible results.

I do not condemn this, and I do not applaud it either: I observe that it is sometimes the only way. There are situations in which nothing is obtained by discussion because the other has no reason to yield: it must then cost him something. There are peoples whose history no longer allows patience: when one has been humiliated too long, dignity becomes a physical need, and a people that does not stand up dies of something other than poverty. And there are moments when rupture is the only way of proving to one's own that another life is possible: that demonstration has a value, even if it costs dearly.

I say only what an engineer would say of a structure: confrontation has a cost, one must have calculated it, and one must have planned

what will replace what one removes. To break without a substitute is to demolish a bridge before having built another: the crossing will be made all the same, but by swimming, and it is the weakest who will drown. Those who choose this way often know it better than their critics.

And I add the thing I have to say in my own right, as a Kamite: the one who breaks must not become disreputable to us. A brother who chooses the hard way remains a brother. One may find that he is going fast; one has no right to treat him as an enemy.

IV. Collaboration is also a strategy

And there are those who do not break. They keep the agreements, they stay in the organisations, they receive the delegations, they sign, they negotiate, they advance by small recoveries: a point of taxation here, a local-content clause there, a processing plant, a discreet renegotiation ten years later.

They are readily called sell-outs. I refuse that word, and I shall say why as a technician.

There are things that can be obtained only by staying inside. A country that stays in a regional organisation keeps its ports, its corridors, its common bank, its agreements on the recognition of diplomas and the free movement of its nationals. It also keeps a voice in the decisions that concern it. The one who leaves is free in his movements, but he is no longer in the room where decisions are made.

There is above all the question of critical mass. None of our countries, taken alone, weighs enough to impose anything

whatever: neither on the price of cocoa, nor on that of gold, nor on a trade rule, nor on an operating contract. One must be several and one must be big. Now one becomes big only by staying together for a certain time, including with people who do not move at the same pace as oneself. The one who collaborates today may be patiently building up the mass that will make it possible to say no tomorrow.

And that strategy is neither an African invention nor a cowardice: it is the ordinary rule of all those who have risen to power in history. One enters the other's system, one learns its rules, one makes oneself necessary in it, and one day one weighs enough to change its terms. Whole nations have risen again that way, in one generation, without having shouted once.

So, to the Kamites: stop despising those of our countries that advance gently. Look at what they build while they keep silent. And stop despising likewise those who break: look at what they prove while they shout. **They are two roads to the same house.**

V. What the minority and the majority teach us

I now approach an observation that people rarely dare to write, and I shall treat it as a general law, because that is what it is, and not as a reproach addressed to anyone.

A group does not behave in the same way according to whether it is few or many. When it is in the minority, it asks for tolerance, it insists on freedom of conscience, it shows itself accommodating, it puts forward what it shares with the others. When it becomes the majority, the same group, with the same texts and often the same men, begins to speak of common norms, of what is proper, of what

the law ought after all to recognise. Nobody has lied: the position has changed, and the discourse has followed.

I say it in a way that leaves no room for confusion, for I do not want my pen used against believers. **This law holds for everyone, without a single exception.** It holds for the great religions, all of them, and the history of each shows it to whoever will read it honestly. It holds for political parties: in opposition one demands the right to demonstrate, in power one discovers the necessities of public order. It holds for states: those who yesterday demanded free trade today protect their industries, and vice versa. It held for those who came to us: they arrived asking for a trading post and they ended by writing our laws.

And I go all the way, otherwise it would be dishonest: **it will hold for us too.** The day the Kamites are numerous, visible and powerful in a country, there will be men among us to explain that the others ought after all to respect our ways, that the state should recognise our days, that our rules should carry some weight. It is precisely for that day that I write the rule of the ancestors: each addresses his own, none imposes his own on anyone, and that does not depend on numbers. A tolerance that holds only so long as one is weak is not a tolerance: it is a tactic.

What is to be done with this? Two things, and not a third.

First, never be naive. When a group is amiable because it is weak, that is no guarantee for the future: it is a photograph of the moment. One therefore protects oneself by written rules, enforceable, which will hold on the day the balance of power has changed. That is the reason for everything I institute: a writing holds when favour passes.

Next, never make it an accusation against persons. The believer praying beside you is not responsible for a law of sociology. He has no plan. He raises his children, he pays his rent, he fears the same things as you. To throw in his face what others may perhaps do in thirty years is to make an enemy of him today for a fault he has not committed. We fight balances of power and doctrines; never a man who prays.

VI. The brother who seems to get on with the adversary

Let us come to the suspicion itself, since it is from it that everything starts.

A country sees its neighbour receive a foreign delegation, sign an agreement, keep a base, host a summit. And it thinks: that one gets on with them, therefore he is against me; if they want to strike me, they will go through him. The reasoning looks solid. It is false, and I shall say exactly why.

First, it confuses a relationship with an intention. A neighbour may have kept a cooperation because he has no other means of equipping his army, or because half his budget depends on it, or because his population works over there and sends money home. That says nothing about what he thinks of you.

Second, it forgets that the neighbour is afraid too. Those who look at you with mistrust often suspect you of the very thing you reproach them with. Two men who watch each other for fear of being attacked always end by attacking each other: it is a known mechanism, and it needs no villain to produce a war.

Third, it takes the method for the objective. I have said what I think of the two ways: they go to the same place. The one who stays in an organisation has not renounced his sovereignty; he has chosen to take it back another way.

So here is what I ask, and it is the sentence I should like to be retained from this whole part: **do, case by case, what seems best to you for yourselves, and never forget that your neighbours are your brothers.** Trust them. Even if they seem to get on with the one who exploits us, they are aware of what surrounds them. Different methods do not mean that they do not understand. We are all aware: the Muslims, the Christians, the Kamites, the states, the young of the towns and the old of the villages. Nobody here is fooled. The awareness is shared; it is the means that differ.

And since I speak to both sides, I speak also to those who have not broken: do not call those who have every name under the sun. Do not go explaining that they are adventurers, that they are heading for the wall, that they make their people suffer for the sake of glory. They are your brothers, they have their reasons, and a part of those reasons is their history, which you have not lived.

VII. Remaining Kamites in our diversity

I end this part with what concerns us in our own right.

We are a federation of spiritualities and not a religion: that is what I instituted, and I draw here its political consequence. A federation does not require that all do the same; it requires only that nobody turn against the others. We accepted that for our cults: the Bwa does not ask the Yoruba to sacrifice as he does, the Dogon does not ask

the follower of vodun to name things as he does. Why should we be, in matters of strategy, more intolerant than we are in matters of spirituality?

A Kamite of the Sahel does not live what a Kamite of the coast lives. A Kamite of the diaspora does not risk what a Kamite of a country at war risks. A Kamite in a country with a large Muslim majority does not have the same margins as a Kamite in a country with a large Christian majority. To demand the same method of them is not to know where they live.

I therefore lay down the rule: **we judge ourselves on the objective, never on the method.** The objective is known and I write it out in full: to leave neo-colonialism behind; to make what we consume; to process what we produce; to train our own; to speak our languages; to honour our ancestors without asking forgiveness for it; and never again to let ourselves be killed. Whoever goes towards that is one of ours, whatever road he has chosen.

And I say it in a manner that is as good as an oath: **let us be Kamites, AES or not.** This sentence is directed against no one. It says that a recent membership, an organisation, an acronym, a treaty cannot undo a brotherhood of several thousand years. Organisations are born and die; I have seen some born and I shall see some die. Our peoples were there before them and will be there after.

PART THREE

The palaver between brothers

What African justice can do that diplomacy cannot — and how to use it to reconcile Côte d'Ivoire with itself and the Sahel with its neighbours

I. Why African justice is the right door

Here is the central idea of this declaration, and I shall set it out slowly.

When two African states fall out, the same thing is always done: a summit. The heads are gathered in an air-conditioned hall, a communiqué is prepared even before the meeting, hands are shaken in front of the photographers, and each goes home. Six months later, nothing has moved, because nothing has been said. The summit is not a method of reconciliation: it is a method of display.

Now we have, for our part, a proven method for reconciling people who must go on living side by side. It is called the palaver. It is not folklore: it is a technique, with precise rules, and it was designed for exactly that problem.

It rests on five principles that I recall, because they are the exact reverse of what a summit does.

First principle: one does not look for a culprit. One looks for what has been broken and what must be laid down to close it. This is capital between states: no government will come and sit at a table where it knows it will be designated as the guilty party before its own people. A procedure that begins by looking for the culprit never begins.

Second principle: one speaks publicly, before the people of the place. No corridors, no texts drafted in advance by advisers. What is said in front of everyone binds the one who said it.

Third principle: one takes time. The palaver is not held in an afternoon because an aircraft is waiting. It lasts as long as it must, sometimes several seasons, and that slowness is a tool: it lets the anger subside and it obliges each to hear the other out to the end.

Fourth principle: there is a third party who has no interest in the matter. Neither judge, nor arbitrator, nor protecting power: someone whose only role is to make acceptable a peace that honour forbids anyone to propose first.

Fifth principle: one ends with a meal. And the matter is closed only when people have eaten together. It is the gesture that says nothing remains owed.

I maintain that these five principles hold between states as they hold between families, because the states I speak of are neighbours for ever, exactly like two houses in the same village: they cannot move away.

II. What Côte d'Ivoire has already proved

And we do not need to imagine it, for it has already been done in my own country, on the most explosive subject there is: land.

I have described it in detail elsewhere and I summarise. Since the 1998 law on rural land tenure and the texts that followed it, the procedure leading to the land certificate does not begin at the court or at the ministry: it begins in the village. A committee, on which sit the customary authority and the representatives of the inhabitants, establishes publicly who cleared, who planted, who bought, who received. The neighbours are summoned, disputes are voiced in front of everyone, people go down to the plot, they walk the boundaries. What comes out of that is written down, and then the administration registers, marks out and guarantees.

The result is known to all who live in our countryside: where this procedure is actually applied, land conflicts fall. Not because a judge has ruled, but because the facts were established by those who knew them, before those whom it concerned, and because the state then gave that agreement the force of paper.

There is the formula, and it fits in one line: **custom establishes the facts and reconciles; the state registers, guarantees and protects the weak.**

I now ask that this formula be looked at without seeing in it merely a land technique. It is a complete model of reconciliation, and it was validated by the hardest test: among us, land was, in the years of crisis, the fuel of the war. If the method held there, it will hold elsewhere.

And I add the precaution I laid down in my declaration on justice, for it is the heart of the Ivorian matter: the rights of women and those of newcomers must be entered in the same register and with the same force. A register that enters only half the rightful claimants prepares the next war. Most of our grudges do not come from custom: they come from a part of the inhabitants having been left outside the paper.

III. Reconciling Côte d'Ivoire with itself

I come to my country, and I speak of it with caution, because I have no lesson to give anyone here.

We still carry the aftermath of two decades of crisis. Much was said, much was signed, commissions were held that few remember, and life resumed because life always resumes. But something was not done, and everybody knows it: the palaver. Naming, before the people of the place, what was taken, what was burned, who left, who settled in during the absence, who harvested on another man's plantation; and laying something down — a restitution, a compensation, a piece of work, a word — until the matter is closed.

I shall be told that it is immense. No: it is numerous, which is not the same thing. The grudges of the crisis are not one great insoluble national question; they are thousands of small, very concrete

matters: a plot, a house, a herd, a shop, a grave. Each can be settled under a tree in a season. What is impossible is to settle them all at once by a speech; what is possible is to settle them one by one, plot by plot, with a register.

And I say again why the imported method will not manage it. It requires a culprit, a trial and a sentence. Now none of our villages wants to designate a culprit among its own sons, and there is not always a single one: often one man occupied because the other had left, and the other had left because he had been threatened. So long as we reason with the mind of outside — and with that of the religions which need a sinner — we shall get nowhere.

Someone is also needed who belongs to no camp. That is the role the Bwa Sacré offers publicly, without anything in return and without drawing a post from it: we ask no one to leave his faith or his party in order to come and sit down; we ask that he come without them. And we withdraw the day we are no longer wanted.

IV. The Sahel and its neighbours

I pass to the other quarrel, and I shall describe it by its public facts, without interpreting it.

An alliance was formed between three states of the Sahel by a charter signed at Bamako on September 16, 2023, transformed into a confederation at a summit held at Niamey on July 6, 2024. Withdrawal from the West African regional organisation was announced on January 28, 2024 and became effective on January 29, 2025, the organisation having maintained transitional measures, notably the recognition of passports and visa-free movement. A joint force was

set up, a confederal levy of 0.5% on imports from outside was instituted in March 2025 to finance common projects, a confederal investment bank was inaugurated at Bamako on December 23, 2025, a common passport was rolled out, and a confederal parliament held its inaugural session at Niamey on August 24, 2026. On the side of the regional organisation, a negotiator was mandated and his mandate extended to the end of 2026, the discussions bearing on security, logistics corridors and economic exchanges, both parties stating that they wish to preserve the free movement of persons and goods. To this day, the three states still share the common currency of the West African union.

Those are the facts. I draw no judgement from them: neither that it was good, nor that it was bad. They are sovereign decisions, and those who took them answer for them before their peoples.

What I look at, for my part, is something else: what is in the course of breaking between people who are one and the same family. A Senufo of Sikasso and a Senufo of Korhogo. A Bwa of Djibasso and a Bwa from the other side of the line. A Malinke of Kankan, of Bamako, of Odienné. The women traders who do the market on both sides. The herdsmen who follow the rain as their fathers did. The lorry drivers of the corridor. The students. The hundred thousand families half of which work in the south and send the money north: that is my own family, and it is that of millions of others.

Those people decided nothing and they will pay for everything. And they have never regarded one another as strangers, because they are not: it is the lines that are recent, not they.

So I say to both sides, with the respect I owe to sovereign states: settle your affairs as you see fit, take the time it needs, discuss corridors, tariffs and security – but do not let the quarrel come down into the peoples. A quarrel between states is repaired in two years. A hatred between neighbouring peoples lasts three generations: we have the proof before our eyes, elsewhere on this continent, and we know what it costs.

V. The palaver between states: the proposal

I now propose something usable, as I did for justice, in seven numbered measures. It is not a treaty: it is a procedure, and any brother states may take it up, correct it and make it their own.

First measure: the palaver is not a summit. It does not first gather the heads. It gathers those who suffer: the hauliers, the women traders, the herders, the local elected officials of the border zones, the customary chiefs on both sides, the women who do the market. The states send representatives who listen before they speak. The heads come at the end, to endorse what has been built, and not at the beginning, to photograph what does not exist.

Second measure: the place is a border place, not a capital. One sits where the thing happens: at a post, in a market, in a commune on either side of the line. One does not summon people a thousand kilometres away to talk about their own lives.

Third measure: the agenda is made of concrete grievances, never of principles. One does not discuss sovereignty, dignity or betrayal: those words have no solution. One discusses the blocked lorry, the veterinary certificate, the closed transhumance corridor, the interrupted weekly market, the pupil who can no longer enrol,

the sick man who can no longer reach the nearest hospital because it is on the other side. Each of these things has a technical solution, and each solution gives back a little trust.

Fourth measure: no communiqué prepared in advance. What is to be said will come out of the session, or nothing will come out. A text drafted before the meeting proves that the meeting was useless.

Fifth measure: a written and sealed register. Each grievance is entered, with what was agreed, the date, the deadline and the names of those who committed themselves. The register is kept in the languages of the place with a facing translation, and each party keeps a copy. It is the writing that distinguishes a palaver from a conversation: without it, everything starts again at the first incident.

Sixth measure: the women sit. It is not the men who hold the cross-border trade in foodstuffs; it is they. They know where the real difficulties lie, and they have no interest in escalation. A border palaver without the women traders ignores half the facts.

Seventh measure: a third party without interest, and a meal to finish. The third party is not a state, has no money to lend, no base to install, no contract to obtain. He rules on nothing: he convenes, he makes people speak, he writes, he recalls the commitments. And when a matter is closed, people eat together, because among us nothing is closed before the meal.

The Bwa Sacré publicly offers to hold this role, or to help hold it, for whoever asks. We have neither army, nor credits, nor candidate to get elected: that is precisely what makes us usable. And we withdraw as soon as we are no longer wanted.

VI. What the Kamites will do without waiting for the states

I do not want a declaration content to wait until governments are pleased to do something. Here then is what is being done at our level, right away, and which asks nobody's permission.

We break nothing among ourselves. No Kamite assembly divides according to the alliances of its state. A Kamite of Mali, of Burkina, of Niger, of Côte d'Ivoire, of Benin, of Senegal, of Ghana, of Togo or of Nigeria sits with the others, exactly as before, whatever decisions the capitals take.

We keep the family ties. Families cut by a line remain families: deaths are announced, marriages are made, children move about, the old are visited. Where movement becomes difficult, we say so publicly and we ask that it be eased: that is the kind of concrete grievance the palaver knows how to handle.

We keep a register of grievances. Not of insults: of facts. The blocked lorry, the closed market, the seized herd, the pupil turned away, the woman extorted at the post. Written, dated, verifiable, without naming any political official. That register is what we shall bring on the day people are willing to sit down: one does not reconcile on impressions.

We protect speech. No assembly, no member, no account claiming to speak for the Bwa Sacré will relay an insult against a neighbouring people, an unverified rumour, or a call to attack the nationals of a brother country. Whoever does so does not speak in our name, and that must be said every time, publicly.

We support what builds, wherever it comes from. A processing workshop opened in Burkina gladdens us as much as a factory opened in Côte d'Ivoire. A university that trains engineers in Niger is good news for a Kamite of Abidjan. We applaud the result without asking who obtained it or under what flag.

And we pass it on. Let every family tell its children where it comes from, through which countries it has passed, how many borders it has crossed in four generations. A child who knows that his house has been through five countries will never call his neighbour a foreigner. It is the cheapest vaccine I know.

VII. What we refuse

And here are the limits, as always, for a declaration without limits becomes a weapon in the hands of those who will come after.

We refuse any militia, any armed group, any security structure claiming to speak for the Kamites. We have already instituted it and we confirm it here: our defence protects lives and a place, conquers nothing, avenges nothing. Nobody will use security as a staircase to seize power over us.

We refuse to serve as a relay for any camp whatever — a state, an organisation, a power, a party, a church, a brotherhood. We accept neither funding nor favour from any of them for this work of reconciliation. A paid third party is no longer a third party.

We refuse to designate a people. Neither the Fulani, nor the Tuareg, nor the Dioula, nor the Bété, nor the Mossi, nor any other. Crimes are committed by men, not by peoples, and no security problem has ever been solved by accusing an ethnic group: it has always been

made worse, and those who bear the accused name become victims in their turn.

We refuse to take sides in the domestic politics of a brother state: elections, transitions, trials, successions. It is none of our business, and the day it became our business, we should be good for nothing any more.

We refuse, finally, triumphalism. We shall not say that we have found the solution, nor that our ancestors understood everything and the others nothing. The palaver has faults that I have written down myself: it was slow, it sometimes crushed the juniors, set women aside, treated the stranger badly. We propose a corrected palaver, written, controlled and open — not a step backwards.

What this declaration institutes

So that this should depend neither on a mood nor on one man, I fix in twelve points the position of the Bwa Sacré, valid until a later declaration, signed with the same seal, amends it.

First point. The neighbour is a brother. No decision of state, no treaty, no withdrawal and no alliance undoes Kamite brotherhood.

Second point. We judge ourselves on the objective, never on the method. Direct confrontation and collaboration are two strategies towards the same liberation.

Third point. The Bwa Sacré takes no side in the domestic politics of any state: neither election, nor transition, nor trial, nor succession. It names no head of state.

Fourth point. It is forbidden, in any Kamite assembly, to call a brother an agent of the foreigner, a sell-out or a traitor on account of his country's strategy.

Fifth point. No people is designated. Crimes are the doing of men, never of ethnic groups, and whoever accuses a people does not speak in the name of the Bwa Sacré.

Sixth point. The adversary is an interest, not a race, a colour or a religion. We fight balances of power and doctrines; never a man who prays.

Seventh point. We acknowledge our part. The contracts that bind us were signed by Africans; the first liberation is a room full of lawyers and engineers capable of reading them.

Eighth point. Every step up the value chain is worth more than a speech: to process, refine, train, study here what we used to buy elsewhere.

Ninth point. The Bwa Sacré institutes the palaver between brothers as described in chapter five of the third part: those who suffer first, a border place, concrete grievances, no prepared communiqué, a written and sealed register, the women present, a third party without interest, and a meal to close.

Tenth point. On land as between states: custom establishes the facts and reconciles; the state registers, guarantees and protects the weak. The rights of women and of newcomers are entered in the same register and with the same force.

Eleventh point. The Bwa Sacré offers its neutrality, its registers and its chambers to whoever asks for them, without anything in

return, accepts neither funding nor favour from any camp for this work, and withdraws as soon as it is no longer wanted.

Twelfth point. No militia, no armed group, no security structure will claim to speak for the Kamites. Our defence protects lives and a place; it conquers nothing and avenges nothing.

Closing

I began this declaration with African justice because it is the lowest and the surest door. One does not enter a house by the roof. One does not enter reconciliation by principles, sovereignty and honour: one enters it by the blocked lorry, the disputed plot, the closed market, the seized herd. They are small things. It is they that make wars, and it is they that make peace.

We have, for dealing with these small things, a technique that our fathers perfected over centuries and that we have been ashamed to bring out: the palaver. It looks for no culprit, it speaks in public, it takes time, it passes through a man who has nothing to gain from it, and it ends with a meal. It lacked writing; we give it that. It lacked the women; we put them in it. It lacked a control; we institute it. Thus corrected, it holds for two brothers of the same village and for two states of the same region, for the problem is the same: one cannot move away.

The rest, I have said in the simplest terms I have. The coloniser has not changed: it is his strategy that changes, and it has changed every time the old one became too expensive. He no longer needs to divide us: we know how to do it ourselves, and it is the only thing

we ever learned well from him. Every time two of our countries fall out, someone elsewhere is lapping it up, and it is neither of us.

So: do, case by case, what seems best to you for yourselves. Break if your history demands it; stay if your calculation demands it. But never forget that your neighbours are your brothers, and trust them, even when they seem to get on with the one who exploits us: they are aware of everything that surrounds them, and different methods do not mean that they do not understand. We are all aware – the Muslims, the Christians, the Kamites, the states. It is the means that differ, not the lucidity.

It is no use attacking one's neighbours. Let us be serene and lucid. And let us remain Kamites in our diversity: **let us be Kamites, AES or not.**

Amen Hotep – Amenhotep.

The President of the Bwa Sacré

BAZURU

Abidjan, September 13, 2026

THIRD MOVEMENT

The Proof

The Seal — the act and the conduct:
to prove without delivering anything

– Chapter XV –

The Seal

Act of the Bwa Sacré instituting the seal of the Kamites, the Kamite standard of signature, its register and its timestamping in the Kamite calendar

Solemn declaration of the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Kamites

Abidjan, September 18, 2026

English edition · Original French edition:
Le Sceau

Preliminary note

This declaration expresses my position as Venerable and President of the Kamites — and, where it must, as an engineer and as a sworn expert before the courts, who has spent nineteen years establishing what can be proved and what cannot. It addresses all the Kamites of the world, and it institutes a tool, not a doctrine.

The Bwa Sacré has signed and sealed its writings from the first day. Every text in this series carries a fingerprint, a certificate and an anchoring in the Bitcoin blockchain, and anyone may recompute them without asking our leave. What we have done for our books, we open here to all Kamites: to the one who writes, to the one who composes, to the craftsman who draws, to the sanctuary that keeps its registers, to the family that deposits a word for its children.

I want to say at once where the true subject lies, because one almost always mistakes the place. It is believed that the difficulty is to date. It is not: dating is a problem long solved, and well solved. The difficulty lies in what one hands over when signing. The tools the world offers us require, in order to set a mark upon a document, that the document be given to them; and most often that the key be entrusted to them as well, so that it is no longer even we who sign. For a poem, let it pass. For the list of a sanctuary's members, for a family act, for what must remain among us, it is out of the question. This act therefore institutes, before any timestamping, a standard of signature: **the document never leaves, and the key belongs to its holder alone.**

Two points of method, so that I am not credited with more than I say. The first: sealing and keeping are two different trades, and I

separate them in the fourth section. Sealing asks only for the fingerprint; keeping asks for the document, necessarily, and it is then a service one requests, never a toll one submits to. The second: this act is not alone in the world. There already exists, from the same hand and under another house, a standard addressed to the States of West Africa through their institutions; I set it out in the tenth section, I say what the Seal takes from it, and I say how it differs. To keep silent about that would be unworthy of the seal I am setting.

And we date in our own calendar. This is no ornament: a people that dates nothing in its own reckoning ends by believing that its time never began. The first year has been fixed at Narmer since *The Kamite Pilgrimage*; the year opens on July 26; twelve months of thirty days, and five days outside time. The seal shall write that date, with universal time beside it, so that the proof may also stand before those who do not count as we do.

One last thing. This seal does not judge, grants no right over anyone, replaces no law and claims no recognition that has not been given to it. It establishes one thing, and establishes it beyond argument: that such a file existed, under such a hand, no later than such a date. That is called anteriority, and it is precisely what our own have lacked each time something was taken from them. As always, I do not ask to be taken at my word: the references are at the end of the volume, the standards I cite are public, and the verification procedure is written into the act itself.

I. Opening: the man who wrote first and cannot prove it

A man composes a song in a courtyard in Abidjan. Six months later he hears it on the radio under another name, and he has nothing: not a date, not a witness who cannot be challenged, not a paper. A woman draws a pattern her mother passed to her; it reappears on a cloth sold on the other side of the world, registered by someone who knew where such things are registered. A sanctuary has kept the list of its members in an exercise book for thirty years; the book burns, and thirty years of memory burn with it.

This is not a story about property: it is a story about proof. Our ancestors had a register, and I have shown elsewhere that it needed no writing to hold: the name, the lineage, the witnesses and the tree were enough, because everyone was there. We are no longer all there. We are in Bahia, in Kingston, in Bamako and in Montreuil, and the neighbour who might testify knows neither our mother nor our village.

We need, then, a register that holds between people who never see one another. Not to replace the tree: to give it a written brother, sealed, and verifiable by anyone at all — including by the man who does not believe us.

And we need it without paying the price usually asked for that service: the surrender of the very thing we meant to protect. That is the knot of this act, and I come to it in the third section, once I have said exactly what a seal can and cannot do.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

II. What the seal proves, and what it does not

The mechanism is simple, and its simplicity is its strength. From a file — a text, an image, a recording of an elder's voice — one computes a fingerprint of sixty-four characters by the SHA-256 function. That fingerprint says nothing of the content: one cannot go back from the number to the file. But it changes entirely if a single byte is altered, and no one knows how to make two different files that would give the same one.

The seal attaches this fingerprint to a holder and to a date, then writes the whole into a register whose root is anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain. From then on, three things are established for ever: that this file existed, that it bore the hand of this holder, and that it is no later than this date.

Three things are not, and I write them down so that no one mistakes what he holds. The seal does not say the content is true: one may seal a lie, and it will remain a dated lie. It gives no right against a third party: the ownership of a work is settled before the competent courts and under the applicable law, not before us. And it does not prove that a holder is the first author in the world: it proves that he was there on that date, which is already what one almost always lacks.

Retain above all this, which governs everything that follows: **to establish those three things, the fingerprint suffices.** The register needs nothing else. It does not need the document, it does not need to know a word of it, and it does not need the holder's key. Any architecture that asks for more is asking for what it has no use for — and I shall show that it asks for a great deal more.

III. The true problem: what one hands over when signing

I have spoken much of the date, and the date is a fine thing. But that is not where we are taken. Where we are taken is at the very moment of signing.

When a man signs today with the tools of commerce, he believes he is setting a mark. In truth he does four things, and three of them escape him.

He sends the document. The whole file goes up onto a machine he does not know, in a country he did not choose, under a jurisdiction he has not read. That machine keeps a copy, often for years, because the provider must be able to prove later what it did: its retention is not an abuse, it is the condition of its trade. Which is exactly why it is not negotiable.

He entrusts his key — or rather, he never had one. In the most widespread model it is not he who signs: he authenticates himself, and the provider signs in his place, with a key the provider holds in its vaults. This has a name, and it has a standard: server signing, described without evasion by the European texts EN 419241-1 and EN 419241-2. Let them be read: they honestly specify a system in which the signature creation device is held by a third party on the signatory's behalf. Nothing is hidden there. Only, almost no one reads them.

He leaves a log. Who signed, what, when, from which address, with whom else, and how many times. Such a log is no formality: it is the map of his relations. For a company that is awkward. For a sanctuary it is a list of names handed to a stranger.

And with the same gesture he hands over the law that will apply. That is the fourth thing, and it is the one no technical measure corrects: a document entrusted to a company subject to a foreign law becomes accessible to the authority of that country, sometimes without the owner being informed, and without any effective remedy before courts that are not his own. This depends neither on the provider's seriousness nor on the quality of its encryption: it is written into its legal status. A prudent man may choose his provider; he does not choose the law to which that provider is subject.

Let us measure what this means for our own. The sanctuary that deposits its list of members with a foreign provider has not protected the list: it has published it to a single recipient, and it can no longer take it back. The family that seals an act for its children has handed the act over. The man who dates a confidential word has done precisely the opposite of what he intended: he has made it readable elsewhere in order to be certified that it was his. And this strikes head-on against our oldest rule, the one that has never known an exception: none of our texts exposes our own.

The objection will be made to me, and it is sincere: these houses are serious, they are audited, they encrypt. I answer as an engineer, not as a prosecutor. Encryption at rest protects against the theft of the disk; it does not protect against whoever holds the decryption key – that is, against the provider itself – nor against the authority that demands it of him. As for the audit, it moves the question without treating it. The question is not "are they honest?" – they may well be, and lastingly so. The question is: **do I need them to be?** An architecture that requires the virtue of a third party is an architecture that has already yielded, for virtue is not a property of the system: it

is a hope placed in the men who keep it, and in those, unknown, who will keep it after them.

I shall say at last what I truly think, and I shall be forgiven for saying it plainly. The reflex of handing over the document to obtain the stamp is a reflex we know all too well. For a century we were taught to hold out our papers at a counter and wait. This act is written so that we stop holding them out.

IV. The Kamite standard: to sign without handing over — and sealing is not keeping

Here is the good news, and it is technical. **It is not the standard that requires the document to be handed over: it is the service.** The world has confused the two, and it had an interest in confusing them.

The standard for signature within a PDF — PAdES, ETSI EN 319 142 — describes only a container: how a signature is lodged in the file, and how it is read back out. Nowhere does it say that the file must travel. The same holds for the other containers, CAdES and XAdES. And the same holds for timestamping: the RFC 3161 protocol receives only a fingerprint, and OpenTimestamps likewise. At no point in this stack is the document necessary.

What follows deserves to be written in full: **compatibility costs us nothing.** A document sealed under the Kamite standard opens in any reader in the world, and its signature is read there like any other, without a single byte of the document having left the machine of the one who signed it. We are not stepping outside the

world: we are merely refusing to hand it what it has no need to hold.

What leaves, then? Sixty-four characters. And from those sixty-four characters no one goes back to anything: not to the text, not to its length, not to its language, not to the name written in it. Whoever receives them does not know whether he holds the fingerprint of a poem, a contract or a photograph. He knows only that some digital object exists, somewhere, which yields that number.

The Kamite standard therefore holds in three sentences, and I write them so that they may be recited:

> The document never leaves.
> The key belongs to its holder alone.
> Verification depends on no one, not even on us.

Two trades must now be separated, which are almost always confused, and the confusion is costly — it costs whoever maintains it the very possibility of the rule just stated.

To seal is to establish that a file existed under a hand on a date. That asks only for the fingerprint. Nothing else is necessary, therefore nothing else must be demanded: in matters of proof as elsewhere, what is required beyond the necessary is required for some reason other than the one put forward.

To keep is to hold the file so that someone may find it again in twenty or fifty years. That plainly asks for the file: one does not keep what one does not have. A public officer who must produce an act half a century later needs a vault, and that vault is no abuse: it is one of the heaviest undertakings an operator can give, since he promises to be there after the death of those who signed.

The Kamite rule therefore does not condemn the vault. **It forbids that one be obliged to pass through it in order to obtain the seal.** He who wants the vault asks for it, and asks for it knowingly: duration, place, jurisdiction, encryption, conditions of exit, all written in advance. He who wants only the seal hands over nothing — and obtains it whole, with the same value, without being made to feel that he took only half the service.

This separation governs articles four and five, and it holds in one sentence: **the vault is a service, never a toll.**

The engineer's formulation is drier, and it is the one I keep for implementations: we do not ask the third party to be honest, we arrange matters so that his honesty does not enter the calculation. A system that stands without anyone's virtue is a system that will still stand when the men who wrote it are gone. That is the only horizon worth having for a people that counts in millennia.

V. The three levels, and the unplugging test

So that a tool may be judged without being an engineer, I distinguish three levels. Each is recognized by a single question: what leaves the signatory's machine at the moment of signing?

Level zero — the envelope. The document goes up, and the key sits with the provider. This is the most widespread model, the one met everywhere, and the one believed to be "electronic signature" because no other has ever been seen. It is not compliant with the Kamite standard, and there is no acceptable version of this level: no arrangement makes the document less surrendered.

Level one — the remote fingerprint. Recent protocols have corrected half the problem. The client transmits only the fingerprint to be signed, and the document stays with him; this is what the Cloud Signature Consortium interface describes in its version 2.2. The document is safe, and that is real progress, which it would be dishonest not to salute. But the key remains in the provider's vaults: the hand is not the holder's. This level is insufficient, and instructively so, for it proves that the industry knows perfectly well how to do without the document when it chooses to.

Kamite level — nothing but the fingerprint, and the hand with the holder. The signature is produced on the holder's machine, by a key that is his alone and that does not leave it. Nothing goes out but the fingerprint, and only towards the anchoring calendars, which can do nothing with it. This is the only level that bears the seal.

A compliant implementation, whatever it may be and whoever wrote it, never does any of these six things:

require the transmission of the document in order to seal, in whole or in part;
keep a document its holder has not asked to have kept;
hold a holder's private key, or sign on his behalf;
keep a log of signatories, of recipients or of their relations;
make verification dependent on a service, an account or a connection;
refuse a holder the pieces that let him prove without us.

And because a rule that cannot be tested is worth nothing, here is the test, within anyone's reach and requiring no skill whatever: **unplug the network, and sign.** A compliant implementation signs offline, because it needs no one in order to sign. An implementation

that refuses has already answered the question. The anchoring, for its part, may wait for the network to return: it carries only a fingerprint, it may leave an hour or a day later, and its date, being later, takes nothing from the signature — it says only “no later than”, which is all that is asked of it.

I close this section with the gesture as it is actually performed, for a standard one does not know how to carry out remains an intention. The sanctuary that wishes to seal its list of members opens its file on its own machine; the list does not move from there. The tool computes its fingerprint, sets the signature with the sanctuary’s key, and writes the Kamite date and universal time into the cartouche. At this stage nothing has left the house, and the signature is already made: valid, complete, readable by any reader.

Then, and only then, sixty-four characters go out to the register, which writes them down and will bring them into the root of the day. In return the sanctuary receives its act, its Merkle path and its proof of anchoring. A few hours later at most, the root is in a block, and the sanctuary no longer needs us.

Thirty years pass. The exercise book has burned, the old secretary is dead, and someone disputes that such a person was a member in the year 6263. The sanctuary brings out its file — its own, the one it never entrusted — recomputes the fingerprint before the one who disputes, and shows the block. It has nothing to ask of anyone, and it has never shown anything to anyone but the one before whom it chose to justify itself.

That is all. It takes a minute the first time, and it holds as long as the chain does.

VI. The holder's key, and how it is kept without being entrusted

A key one holds alone is a key one can lose. I shall not pretend otherwise, for this is the serious objection, and the only one made to me by people who know what they are speaking of.

Three ways of keeping it, and none consists in handing it over.

The first is the offline copy. A key is only a number: it fits on a sheet, in a sealed envelope, in a strongbox, in some place that is not the machine one works on. Our elders already knew that one does not keep the granary key inside the granary.

The second is sharing among witnesses, and it is the finest, because it is exactly the palaver tree written in mathematics. The secret is cut into parts, and an agreed number of parts is required to reconstitute it: three of five, four of seven, as the house decides. A single part says nothing at all — nothing, in the strict sense, not "almost nothing". Whoever holds it holds no fragment of the key: he holds a number that means something only in the company of the others. This has been public and proven since 1979, and it is our rule of testimony: never a single witness, always several, and concordant.

The third is renewal, and it consoles for all the rest. A lost key is not a lost work. The revocation is written into the register, a fresh key is taken up, and one goes on; and above all, **the acts sealed before the revocation remain valid**, because their proof is no longer with us nor with anyone: it is already in a block. To lose one's key is to lose the faculty of signing tomorrow; it is never to lose what one signed yesterday.

What we shall never do, on the other hand, and what will be asked of us out of convenience: keep a copy "just in case". A service that can rescue you is a service that can replace you. The day we held a copy of a holder's key, this whole act would be a lie, and it would have been better not to have written it.

VII. What the other standards do not see: original creation, and the spoken word

Two things are missing from the standards of the world, and we lack them more than anyone. I treat them together because they share one root: those standards were written for societies where everything was already written down.

The first is original creation. Where land has been titled for two centuries, a public officer's act merely adds itself to an already long chain: it organizes a transmission, a division, a share. This is called a mutation, and the archiving standards are made for it: they guarantee that an already authentic act will not be altered after the fact. That is useful, it is well done, and it presupposes that the hard part is behind us.

With us the situation is structurally different. A parcel may have been peacefully occupied for three generations without ever having received a title. Its first titling creates the title where there was none: the jurists of our countries call this *original creation*. Such an act has no antecedent to attach itself to. It is therefore not enough to prove that it has not been modified since its production: one must prove **that nothing existed before it**, that no competing entry bore upon the same object, and that no date was manufac-

tured backwards. That is absolute anteriority, and only a public anchoring gives it, because it is the one piece that whoever keeps the register cannot remake.

Now original creation is not a matter of land alone, and that is why it concerns us all. The first deposit of a sanctuary that had never deposited anything is one. The first writing down of a pattern that seven generations wove without ever inscribing it is one. The first recording of an elder's voice reciting a genealogy is one. The first articles of a Kamite house constituting itself are one. **We are a people of original creations:** almost everything we hold was taken before it was written, precisely because no one had thought it worth writing. That requirement we borrow from no one; we needed it first.

The seal therefore distinguishes the two, and writes it into the act itself: every sealing declares whether it bears an original creation or a subsequent act. Original creation is anchored without exception and without delay; a subsequent act may be, at the holder's discretion. It costs nothing more and it changes everything, for on the day of a dispute it is not the same thing to say "my file has not moved" and to say "nothing precedes it".

The second is the spoken word. For two centuries we were told that our societies had no archives. They had them: they were spoken, they were held by men whose charge and trade that was, and they carried whole lineages longer than many a paper register. What they lacked was not rigour: it was a date the stranger would consent to accept.

The seal therefore seals the recorded word — audio, video — exactly as it seals a writing: same fingerprint, same certificate, same

anchoring, same value. Not as an appendix to a document that would be the real one: **the recording is the act.** An elder who recites before witnesses, filmed, sealed and anchored, now has a date no one in the world can dispute. The exercise book burns; the voice, once sealed, does not burn.

And the word is sealed in the language in which it was spoken. No one is bound to translate in order to be sealed, nor to pass through the language of the former coloniser for his proof to be received. An act in Bambara, in Dioula, in Creole, in Yoruba or in Portuguese is sealed like an act in French, and the register does not ask for a translation — it asks for nothing at all, since it receives only the fingerprint, and a fingerprint has no language.

Let there be no mistake for all that. Sealing a word does not make it true, and article three applies here as elsewhere: an elder may be wrong, or may lie, and his word will remain a dated word. But the question put to us for two centuries was not that of truth: it was that of the date. It is settled.

VIII. Our reckoning of time, and our register

The first year of the Kamite era corresponds to the year –4236 of the Gregorian reckoning; the year opens on July 26; from January 1 to July 25 the Kamite year is the Gregorian year increased by 4236, and from July 26 to December 31, increased by 4237. The year counts twelve months of thirty days, then the five days outside time, from July 21 to July 25, which belong to no month. This has been instituted since *The Kamite Pilgrimage* and does not change here.

Our year needs no correction, and this is an elegance of our ancestors that would be worth noticing: it is anchored at both ends by fixed dates — the new year on July 26, the five days from the 21st to the 25th — so that it reopens at the same point every year, leap or not, without ever drifting. Where the civil reckoning must add a day so as not to drift, ours has nothing to catch up.

The seal therefore writes the date in two ways, and neither erases the other. It writes the Kamite day — *year 6263, day 25 of the second month* — because that is our time. It writes universal time beside it, because that is the common language of machines and courts, and because a timestamp without an hour cannot separate two acts of the same day. And it gives the short, sortable form for registers and files: `6263-02-25`, or `6262-E-03` for the third day outside time.

The months remain counted and not named, as in *The Kamite Pilgrimage*. Their names, should they one day be needed, will be deposited in the register by declaration; the count itself depends on no name.

The register, now. It is append-only. One writes into it; one never takes anything out. A striking off does not erase a line: it adds one saying that the previous line is struck, with its date and its grounds. A register from which a line can be withdrawn proves nothing, for no one can say any longer what it held yesterday; that is the first rule of any register worthy of the name, and it is also the rule of the tree: what has been said before all is not unsaid in secret.

And here is what the standard of signature entails for it, for the two hold together. **The register writes down only fingerprints and holders.** It contains no document, no extract of a document, no title of a document. This has a consequence not always measured: a

leak of the register delivers nothing. One cannot lose what one never had, and one cannot be compelled to hand over what one does not hold. The best protection of a secret is not the strongbox: it is not having it.

Each day the root of the register is computed — a single fingerprint summing up every line, by the Merkle tree — and it is that root which is anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain. A single anchoring thus seals a thousand acts, and the bearer of each act receives the path linking his fingerprint to that root. He may then prove his act alone, without us, and even against us.

IX. To verify without anyone

Here is what separates a tool from an institution. A tool asks you to log in to its site; an institution writes its procedure so that you can do without it. Ours holds in four gestures, and they are published: compute the SHA-256 fingerprint of the file; check that it appears in the act delivered; climb the Merkle path to the root of the day; submit the proof of anchoring at **opentimestamps.org**, or examine it yourself with a Bitcoin node, to read the block and its date.

Not one of these gestures requires the Bwa Sacré, nor Pixel, nor an account, nor an authority. If our servers fall, if our companies disappear, if I die tomorrow, the proofs already issued remain verifiable, because the Bitcoin blockchain does not belong to us. That is precisely why we chose it.

I add that the first of these gestures is done without the document too — I mean: without showing it to us. He who verifies holds his file; he computes at home; he compares. At no moment does he

send us anything, and at no moment do we learn that he has verified. Confidentiality does not stop at the signature: it runs all the way to the proof, and that is a distinct requirement, almost always forgotten.

And let it be well understood what this means for a people so often asked for papers it was refused: **the proof no longer depends on the goodwill of whoever keeps the register.**

X. The NAOA and the Seal: two sovereignties, one hand

This act is not alone in the world, and I do not want it learned from anyone but me.

On June 18, 2026 a white paper was published under the title *Norme de l'Acte Officiel Africain* – the NAOA, the Standard of the African Official Act – issued by Pixel AI SARLU, a company under Ivorian law, under the IANA identifier PEN 65877, and addressed to the Presidents of the Chambers of Notaries of eight West African countries, to the Ivorian regulatory authority, to the OHADA Commission and to the Councils of Ministers of ECOWAS and of the WAEMU. Twelve principles, governance by a committee of twelve members deciding by two thirds, an adoption calendar running to 2030, and a free licence allowing anyone to take it up.

It is not a text of the Bwa Sacré, and the distinction is not one of form: the Bwa Sacré bears PEN 65878, Pixel AI SARLU bears 65877. Two identifiers, two houses, two registers, two responsibilit-

ies. But it is the same hand that wrote both texts, and it would be unworthy of the seal I am setting to pretend otherwise.

What the Seal takes from the NAOA, it takes without changing a word, and it says so: the attachment of the act to the law that produces it; the requirement of open and published formats, so that an act sealed today remains readable in fifty years whatever the fortune of a software publisher; public anchoring as a requirement and not an option; long conservation and total reversibility for whoever asks for a vault; the recognition of original creation; the recognition of orality; and economic accessibility, because sovereignty cannot be a luxury.

What separates them is not a disagreement. It is a difference of address, and it is entire.

The NAOA speaks to States through their institutions. It proposes, it asks, it awaits a committee, a qualified majority, an integration into an accreditation framework, then a regional recognition: four years at the least. That is the long road, and it is the right road for an official act, for a land title is worth nothing unless the State that produced it recognizes it. A standard of official acts that dispensed with States would be a contradiction in terms.

The Seal, for its part, asks nothing of anyone. It addresses the Kamite of Bahia, of Kingston, of Bamako and of Montreuil: the one who has no Chamber, whose State will recognize nothing for a long while yet, and who needs a date this evening. It awaits no committee because it claims no public force. Where the NAOA will one day have force of law, the Seal will never have more than the force of a verifiable fact — and that is exactly, and only, what we ask of it.

On one point, one alone, the Seal is stricter, and that point is ours. The NAOA does not say that the document must never leave, and it cannot say so: an official act must be kept for a century, therefore entrusted to someone. The Seal says it, because it does not serve States: it serves men, families and sanctuaries who have excellent reasons to hand nothing to anyone, and whose safety sometimes rests on no one holding the list of their names.

There is therefore no competition between the two texts, and they must not be read one against the other. It is the same man who, on one side, proposes to States a standard they will take four years to adopt, and who, on the other, gives his own a tool this evening. The first is the sovereignty of our institutions; the second is the sovereignty of each of our own, wherever he may be, including where no institution remains to recognize him.

XI. Where we stand, and the price we accept

A standard that described only what exists would not be a standard: it would be a brochure. A standard says what must be, then writes honestly the distance that separates it from that. The NAOA had that courage on hosting, setting down in black and white its transition and its deadline. I write ours with the same frankness, and I hold this section to be the most useful in the act, because it is the one a complacent text would have passed over.

The reference implementation today is Pixel Sceau, in production since May 21, 2026. It signs in the PAdES format at its long-term validation level, it anchors in the Bitcoin blockchain through OpenTimestamps from that same date, it encrypts deposits, it undertakes

by contract to keep them for a century, it provides for reversibility at six months with a complete and free export, it publishes its tariff schedule in CFA francs without indexation on a foreign currency, and it has undertaken to publish its code under a free licence by June 30, 2027 at the latest. Its vault is hosted in Western Europe, in transition, with a deadline for relocation to the West African zone already fixed and published.

In the light of the present act, that vault raises no difficulty, and I want it understood why: it falls under article five, that is, under keeping, which is a service requested, declared, contractual and reversible. It does not fall under article four, which bears only on sealing. A Kamite who wants only the seal deposits nothing in that vault; one who wants a vault knows where it is, under what law, for how long, and how to leave it.

What remains to be established, on the other hand, I write without softening it, because an act that hides its unfinished work is not worth the paper that carries it. **The Kamite level requires two things that cannot be presumed: that the signature be produced on the holder's machine, and that his private key exist nowhere but with him.** Until that has been established by an independent third party and written into the register, no implementation may call itself at the Kamite level — ours no more than any other, and I claim no favour here for the house. The day that finding is made, it is written into the register with its date; and if it cannot be made, that is written too, with its date. An append-only register that wrote down only the good news would not be a register.

Let us come to the price. Every architecture is paid for, and I prefer to write the price myself rather than leave it to be discovered by those who come after me.

The first price is recognition. Our certificates do not appear in the trust stores of the great software publishers, and an ordinary reader will therefore display, on opening a sealed document, that the validity of the signature is unknown to it. This is no manufacturing defect: it is the same choice, held to the end. To enter those lists supposes submitting to their audit, their conditions and their jurisdiction, and accepting to be removed from them one day by a decision one will not argue with. We have preferred a proof that asks no one's list. And let it be measured in passing what a green banner is worth: it says that an authority has recognized the issuer of the certificate. It does not say that the document is true, nor that the signatory is who he claims to be. The reader who wishes to know need not believe a colour: he recomputes the fingerprint and reads the block.

The second price is responsibility. The key with the holder means the burden with the holder: no service that reopens the door, no number to call on a Sunday evening. Freedom and burden are here one and the same thing, and one cannot take the one without the other. We shall help, we shall explain, we shall publish the ways of keeping a key; we shall not keep the key.

The third price is the absence of compulsion. This seal enforces no contract, summons no one and seizes nothing. It was never made for that. It gives the one who speaks the means of establishing that he spoke first; what he then does with it concerns the courts of his country, and him alone.

These three prices we accept knowingly, and I hold them a good bargain. We exchange the recognition of others for independence, and comfort for sovereignty. It is the only exchange our ancestors would have counselled.

XII. What we institute

Accordingly, and under the seal, I set down in twelve articles the institution of the seal of the Kamites and the Kamite standard of signature.

Article one. There is instituted a seal of the Kamites, kept by the Bwa Sacré, and a register named **SCEAU-0**, under the IANA identifier PEN 65878, distinct from any other identifier and any other house. The seal is offered to the Kamites of the world; it is imposed on no one, and no one is bound to resort to it.

Article two. The seal names an office, a title, a house, a sanctuary or an author. The civil name is never required: a holder may be known by his title alone, as the writings of this series are, and this faculty is a right.

Article three. The seal establishes the fingerprint, the hand and the anteriority. It establishes neither the truth of the content, nor a right against a third party, nor the quality of first author. Any statement to the contrary made by a holder exposes him to striking off.

Article four. Sealing requires only the fingerprint. No one is bound to hand over his document, in whole or in part, in order to obtain the seal; the sealing receives only the fingerprint of the file. An implementation that requires the document to be handed over

in order to seal is not compliant with the Kamite standard and cannot bear the seal.

Article five. Keeping is a distinct service, and an optional one. No document is kept unless its holder has asked for it. The deposit is the subject of a written and prior undertaking covering duration, place, applicable jurisdiction, encryption and the conditions of exit; the duration may not be less than one hundred years, and the exit includes a complete and free export of all the holder's acts in open formats. No technical captivity may be imposed upon a holder.

Article six. The key belongs to the holder. It is produced on his machine and does not leave it. No third party holds it, copies it or keeps it in escrow, not even the Bwa Sacré, and no one signs on a holder's behalf. Compliance is tested without any particular skill: with the network unplugged, the signature is made.

Article seven. Every entry is dated in the Kamite calendar — year, month, day, or day outside time — and at universal time. The short form of the register is `year-month-day`, and `year-E-day` for the five days outside time.

Article eight. The register is append-only. No line is ever withdrawn from it; a striking off is written into it as an addition, dated and reasoned. The register writes down only fingerprints and holders: it contains no document, and no leak can deliver one. Findings of compliance and findings of non-compliance are written into it alike, with their dates.

Article nine. Original creation and the spoken word. Every sealing declares whether it bears an original creation or a subsequent act; original creation is anchored without exception and without

delay. The recorded word, audio or video, is sealed on the same footing and with the same value as a writing, in the language in which it was spoken, and no translation is required.

Article ten. The seal is granted by the Bwa Sacré to whoever asks for it and accepts the present rule; no one is turned away for his name, his faith, his country, his language or the absence of a genealogy. It is withdrawn by the assembly of elders, upon proof, for fraudulent use, for impersonation, or for the contrary statement provided at article three. Striking off does not erase the acts previously sealed: they keep their date, which remains true.

Article eleven. The root of the register is anchored each day in the Bitcoin blockchain by the open OpenTimestamps protocol; one anchoring holds for all the acts of the day, and it may be deferred without the signature being deferred. There is delivered to each holder, with his act, the fingerprint of his file, the Merkle path and the proof of anchoring; these pieces belong to him, he may use them without us and against us, and no one may refuse them to him or take them back. The formats employed are open and published. The verification procedure remains executable without the Bwa Sacré, without Pixel, without an account, without a connection and without an authority; any evolution that would make it impossible is forbidden.

Article twelve. The seal is free for Kamites within the published limits; beyond them, its schedule is published in advance, denominated in CFA francs and without indexation on a foreign currency. The loss, the theft or the death of the holder is written into the register, which publishes the revocation; the acts sealed before the revocation remain valid, and those that follow it are void. No one is

bound to appear, no one is bound to hide: discretion is a protection offered, never an obligation. The present act is revisable by declaration signed with the same seal.

Solemn conclusion

I sum up, so that it may be retained and handed on.

Our ancestors kept a register that no one wrote and that no one could falsify, because the whole village was witness. Dispersion took that witness from us, and we have since been asked for proofs we had no means of producing. We were even offered the means: on condition of handing over what we meant to protect.

We refuse that bargain, and we give ourselves the means otherwise. A seal that names an office without demanding a name; a document that never leaves the house of the one who wrote it, unless he himself asks for a vault and then knows exactly what he is undertaking; a key that is his alone, and that no service holds in order to rescue him; the first time of a thing recognized for what it is and protected as such; the word of our elders sealed like a writing, in its own language; a date written in our own reckoning, the year 6263 and not the year 2026; a register from which nothing comes out and which holds nothing to surrender; an anchoring no one holds, not even us; and a procedure written so that the most modest of sanctuaries may prove what it advances as well as the Venerable.

Let this at least be retained, if only one sentence is retained: **one can prove without showing.** All the rest follows from it.

This act has not proposed: it has instituted. The witnesses have read, the words are exact, the seal is set.

We were asked for our papers for a century, and we were given none. We now keep our own register, we date it in our own time, and we hand nothing over to anyone.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

Done at Abidjan, September 18, 2026, year 6263, day 25 of the second month.

KING BAZURU

Venerable and President of the Kamites

– Chapter XVI –

The Key of the Kamite

Practical conduct of the 09: making your key, keeping it, renewing it in the five days outside time, replacing it

Established by the Venerable

KING BAZURU

President of the Kamites

Abidjan, September 19, 2026

In application of the act
“The Seal”

Preliminary note

The act *The Seal* instituted the Kamite standard of signature: the document never leaves, and the key belongs to its holder alone. It states the rule. It does not state the gestures. This book states the gestures.

It addresses every Kamite holding a 09 identifier of the SCEAU-0 register, and it is written to be carried out by someone who is not an engineer, then read over by someone who is. You will find in it the order in which things are done, and above all what happens when the order is wrong: in three of the six cases of replacement, the order of the gestures decides everything, and the mistake cannot be undone.

I publish this conduct rather than keep it for the house, and I give the reason. A standard that only its author knows how to apply is not a standard: it is one more dependency, dressed up as sovereignty. For the seal to belong to the Kamites, any one of them must be able to write the tool that sets it, test it, and do without us. The annex exists for that: it fixes the parameters precisely enough that two implementations written by two people who have never met will produce the same key from the same card and the same name.

Two warnings, so that I am not credited with more than I say. First: this book describes the practice of the Kamite level, which is the only one that bears the seal. Most Kamites will begin elsewhere, with the tools they have, and that is no fault; after the twelfth chapter you will find how to test a tool and how to move from one level to another without losing anything already signed. Second: nothing here replaces the act. Where the conduct and the rule seem

to diverge, it is the rule that speaks, and the conduct that must be corrected.

I must finally say what this book costs the one who follows it, for it costs something, and to keep silent would be dishonest. The decision that the name be known to its bearer alone — the one that makes a 09 die with the man, and a stolen card worthless — has as its exact reverse that a forgotten name is not recovered. The price is written out in full in the fourth chapter, and there is only one honest remedy: the rite of the five days.

I. What a 09 is, and what it is not

The 09 designates a natural person. It is not lent, not rented, not transmitted, and it does not outlive its holder: it is the only identifier of the register whose death is written into its very nature.

It must be distinguished from the other two tiers, because the rules of keeping are not the same there. The **07** designates a legal person: a house, a company, a constituted sanctuary; it lasts as long as the house does. The **08** designates the head of an 07 — a manager, an officer, a president — and it is transmissible: when the charge changes hands, the 08 follows. The **09** is the man himself.

One precision governs everything that follows, and it is misunderstood the first time. To say that an 08 is transmissible **does not mean that the key is transmitted**. What passes to the successor is the charge; he makes his own key, and the register records who held the 08 between which dates. A key that two men have held proves nothing any more: from the day two people can produce the same signature, everything signed before becomes contestable. Hence the

rule, at every tier: **a charge is recorded in the register; a key is never handed on.**

One man may bear several identifiers: one or two 09s as his needs require, several 08s if he holds several charges, and stand behind several 07s. Each has its own key. Never do two identifiers share a key: that would link them publicly for good, and force the revocation of one when the other is revoked.

II. One does not store a key: one stores what remakes it

The question everyone asks first is: *where do I put the private key?* As long as it is put that way, there is no way out. Every safe place is a place one can be dispossessed of, and every place a service can give you back access to is a place that service can enter without you.

The way out is to separate three objects that usage confuses.

Object	Where it lives	What it allows
The twenty-four words the randomness	On paper, written by hand, outside any device	To carry the randomness. Alone, they yield no usable key.
The name the meaning	In the holder's memory alone. Nowhere else.	To complete the twenty-four words. Without it, the card is inert.
The working key a number	In the device's secure element, non-exportable	To sign day by day, without ever leaving the machine.

The working key is born of the first two by a fixed computation: same words, same name, same key, always. The telephone falls into the lagoon? You take out the card, say the name to yourself again, recover exactly the same key on another device, and go on signing under the same identity. No service had to help; no one ever held anything. This is how the sixth article holds without contradicting itself: the key is produced on the holder's machine and does not leave it, and yet the loss of a device is not a catastrophe.

III. What our ancestors already had

Nothing above is new, except the words for saying it. The fourth Book of Lassa describes the three ceremonies that make a man in Bwa country: *teerobè*, the presentation to the Ancestors; *tchènirobè*, the entry into the bush, which is the initiation; *bwan bèssi robè*, the liberation of the soul, which is the funeral rites and not the burial. The three objects of the signature are already there, each in its right place.

The twig, or registration from afar

At *teerobè*, the person concerned is not present. Whether he is in the village, in Paris, in Montreal or in Bahia, he is represented by a twig that his father or his uncle has handed over; it is the twig that is presented to the Ancestors, and it is by the twig that he is inscribed in the lineage. This is, word for word, the certificate request: what is presented to the keepers of the register is neither the man nor his secret, but an object that stands for him, and the inscription holds wherever he may be. The problem of dispersal,

which *The Seal* raises in its first section, custom had solved with a twig.

The name of the spirit, or the seed

At *teerobè*, a name is given to the spirit. In custom it was pronounced once before the elders, then never again in life, and the person himself did not know it: the prudence of a time when a secret was kept only in heads, and when it was judged to hold better in the heads of the old.

For the era now opening, the Bwa Sacré decides otherwise, and this decision is the keystone of the whole book: **the name is henceforth known to its bearer alone, and to no one else.**

This is not a loosening of the rule, it is its tightening. The criterion was never *who* knows the secret, but *how many* know it: a key that several can produce proves nothing any more, whatever the qualities of those who hold it. By bringing the name back to one man, one passes from a kept secret to an opposable proof. The change is of the same order, and taken in the same spirit, as the one by which the Bwa Sacré opened to women what custom kept among initiates: a provision that was wise when it was taken, a reason that has ceased to hold, and a house that says so instead of pretending custom had always spoken this way. What we change, we write down; what we keep, we keep whole.

The name then becomes the **twenty-fifth word**: it is added to the twenty-four the machine has drawn, and without it those twenty-four words yield only a false key, which opens nothing. Three consequences follow, and they settle three problems at once: the stolen card becomes useless, the card found in an inheritance becomes

harmless, and above all **the 09 dies with the man because the name dies with him**. What was merely a rule of procedure becomes a property of the system.

The calling of the soul, or revocation

In custom, the name of the spirit had one use, and one only: death. It is by that name that at *bwan bèssi robè* the soul is called and told to depart. And the book adds, because custom says so, that this name is a point of weakness: whoever knows it can reach the person by calling his spirit, wherever he may be. That is the exact description of a revocation token: a secret entrusted to witnesses, incapable of signing anything, whose sole function is to extinguish – and whose own danger is that the one who holds it can extinguish before the hour. Our ancestors had the object and had documented its vulnerability, which most modern systems omit to do.

But from the moment the name of the spirit is known only to its bearer, it can no longer serve to call him. The function falls vacant, and a second secret takes it up.

The bwa code. This second secret is not to be invented: it already exists, in the software of the Bwa Sacré, under the name *bwa code*, and its rule there is that of custom held to the letter — never displayed in the holder's lifetime, displayed to all upon his death. It is the gesture of *bwan bèssi robè*: the name that had never been pronounced is pronounced at last, before the assembly gathered.

Teerobè therefore now gives two secrets, to two different keepers. The first is the name of the spirit: transmitted to the person alone, retained by no one else, it is his seed; it must remain a name, that is, a thing a man carries in his head without ever writing it — which is precisely what makes it die with him. The second need not be a name, and had better not be one: the machine draws it at random, displays it once before the elders as it displays the twenty-four words, and they transcribe it; the machine does not keep it. It is by this that the soul will be called, and it is this that, in the register, carries the power to extinguish the identity. It can sign nothing.

Two reasons to prefer the draw to the spoken word. A secret drawn by the machine cannot be guessed, whereas a name is sought in the language and usages of a lineage; and above all it can be cut up, transcribed into shares — three of five, four of seven — handed to different elders, so that a quorum is required to act. Custom warned that the name of the spirit was a point of weakness: sharing in parts corrects exactly that weakness, and no elder, alone, can call a soul before the hour. It is the palaver tree applied to what custom itself designated as its defect. Nothing is

dismantled: two secrets are given instead of one, at the same ceremony, and each goes to the one who must keep it.

The rule is stronger than it looks. **The register never records the code itself**, only its fingerprint, dated and anchored like the rest; the code remains with the keepers, in shares. On the day of death the quorum reconstitutes and publishes it, and anyone may then recompute its fingerprint and compare it with the line written years earlier in a block no one rewrites. A leak from the register delivers no one's code, since it is not there; the publication proves itself; and the publication *is* the extinction, public and without return. Once published, the code serves no more: it holds for one man and for one life.

The line no software crosses. The bwa code may live in software: it signs nothing, and its publication is its end. The name, never. The day a program, a server or a register held a holder's name, it could sign in his place, and everything that man had sealed would cease to prove anything. The name is entered only on its bearer's machine, for the time of one computation, and erased from it. No exception, no convenience, no troubleshooting.

There remains *tchènirobè*, the entry into the bush: it is there that the use is taught — how one draws one's twenty-four words, how one keeps them, how one renews in the five days, and what must never be done. Custom had the three gestures; only the machine was missing.

IV. The seed: the twenty-four words and the name

The twenty-four words are a number drawn at random by the machine, written out in words so that a man can copy it without error; the last one carries a checksum, so that a copying mistake is detected instead of being discovered ten years later. The name is not drawn: it is received. It is written nowhere, said to no one, and never replaced.

These two things are not passwords, and that is the costliest misunderstanding. A password protects an access; it can be changed, and a service can reset it for you. **Together, the twenty-four words and the name are the key itself.** Whoever brings them together becomes you, immediately and beyond appeal, for every signature past and to come. There is no one to call.

The four prohibitions.

Never photographed. A photograph goes into the telephone's backup, therefore to a provider, in a country, under a law. A gesture of one second annuls the whole edifice.

Never typed into anything that synchronises. Not a note, not an email to oneself, not an online password manager, not a message. The simple rule: if the device can find the thing again after a reinstall, then it is somewhere else.

Never told to anyone. Not to a relative, not to a repairman, not to a machine that assists you. No one needs your words to help you: whoever asks for them is not helping you.

The name is never typed on a keyboard that learns. Telephone keyboards retain rare words to suggest them later; a Bwamu name entered once may reappear as a suggestion, on a shared device, months afterwards. The tool must ask for the name, use it and erase it: never a "remember me" box, never autofill, and predictive correction disabled for the operation.

One rule of storage, finally: do not put the card next to the device. The thief who takes the bag takes both. This is not mistrust of men, it is the rule of the granary — one does not keep the granary key inside the granary.

What the decision of the name known to oneself alone costs. It must be said once, plainly: a forgotten name is not recovered. No witness holds it, no card carries it, no service restores it. Cryptographically, a forgotten name is indistinguishable from a death. That is the exact price of the decision — the very one that makes the 09 die with its bearer — and there is only one honest remedy that does not betray the rule: the annual rite of the five days, where one re-derives one's key and verifies, once a year, that the name still opens.

V. The ceremony of creation

Making a key is an act, not a manipulation. It is done once, and done well: a quarter of an hour, alone, and without network.

1. **Cut the network.** Airplane mode, or cable unplugged. This is not superstition: it is the demonstration, made to yourself, that nothing that follows needs to go out.
2. **Check the device.** A device of your own, up to date, not jailbroken, administered by no one else. Not the office computer managed by an IT department, not a third party's telephone, not a borrowed machine.
3. **Let the tool draw the twenty-four words.** The machine's randomness, never words you have chosen yourself: a phrase one man can invent, another can guess.
4. **Copy them by hand**, numbered, on a lasting support: heavy paper, a card, or an engraved plate if the charge warrants it. Read them twice, and have the tool confirm the checksum.

5. **Give the name.** Once only, with the learning keyboard disabled. The tool has you enter it again to verify, then erases it: it does not keep it, does not display it again, does not put it anywhere.
6. **Store the card away from the device**, in a place you answer for. It is worth nothing without the name: that is what lets you store it without anxiety.
7. **Let the key derive** and settle into the secure element, protected by face, fingerprint or a code.
8. **Test it at once:** sign any file, network still cut. If the signature is made, the tool conforms on that point. If it fails for want of network, the tool is not at the Kamite level and must not be used for what matters.

VI. Where the key lives day by day

Three ways, according to what one is and what one signs. None is best in the absolute.

Profile	Where the key lives	What is gained, what is lost
The ordinary Kamite a few acts a year	Secure element of the telephone, unlocked by face or a code	Free, always on you, and the key cannot be extracted even by the application. In exchange it depends on one device: the card and the name are what catch the loss.
The house, the sanctuary regular acts	Secure element of a dedicated machine, or a hardware token in the safe	The key does not follow a person who leaves. Requires discipline: who uses it, when, under whose authority.
The charge that signs often a manager, a venerable	Hardware token — a smart card — with the card as fallback	Portable from one machine to another, non-exportable, robust. The only case that costs money.

> **A key in a secure element is worth only the device that carries it.** The secure element guarantees that the key does not leave. It does not guarantee that it will not be used in your place: on a compromised device, a program can request a signature while you believe you are unlocking something else. Hence the rule: require face, fingerprint or code *at every signature*, never an authorisation that stays open, and read what you sign before signing it.

One technical point governs this chapter, and it is fixed in the annex: the secure elements of telephones can hold only one curve, P-256. A key on another curve is a key that cannot live in the telephone and must live elsewhere — legitimate for a charge equipped with a token, and impracticable for the ordinary Kamite.

VII. Inscription in the register

The 09 identifier exists before the key. Inscription consists in binding the two, publicly and once for all, by a certificate.

The mechanism is that of the twig. The device makes a certificate request containing the public key, the identifier, and a proof that you do hold the corresponding private key — a proof obtained by signing the request itself. That is all that goes out: neither the twenty-four words, nor the name, nor the private key leave the device, including on the day of inscription, including towards the Bwa Sacré.

The certificate issued carries the title, the quality or the name in use of the holder, and his identifier. It does not carry the civil name — never, unless the holder expressly asks: that is the second article, and it is a right, not a favour. It carries no address, no email, no telephone number, and it obviously does not carry the name of the spirit. **Nor does it carry a company name:** a 09 is a man, not an employee; to write the house into the person's certificate is to tie the man to a house he may leave, and, for one who holds two identifiers, to put the same leash on both.

The register then records a line: the identifier, the fingerprint of the certificate, the Kamite date and universal time, and the nature of the act. This first inscription is an *original creation* within the meaning of the ninth article — it is the first time this identifier is bound to this key — and it is therefore anchored without delay.

> **Who names, and who certifies.** Two roles that are confused, and that must be held apart to understand whom an identity belongs to.
>
> **The Bwa Sacré names and grants**: it holds the SCEAU-0 register under the IANA identifier PEN 65878, it allots the 07s, the 08s and the 09s, and it writes the lines. That is the tenth article.
>
> **An operator certifies**: a certification authority, which issues the X.509 certificates under its own policy and its own arc of identifiers, and publishes its specifications. It is not the register, and it may change.
>
> The practical consequence is the only one that matters: **the identifier belongs to the register, never to the operator.** A holder must be able to move from one operator to another keeping his 09, his key and all his past acts — by a simple inscription in the register, signing nothing new and asking nothing of the one he leaves. A house that made this passage impossible would take back with one hand what the sixth article gives with the other.

VIII. Signing, and proving the date

The gesture, in order, and what actually happens at each step.

1. **On your machine**, network cut or not: the tool computes the fingerprint of the file, produces the signature with your key, and draws the cartouche — identifier, title, Kamite date, universal time. At that instant the document is signed and valid. Nothing has gone out.

2. **When the network returns:** the tool requests a timestamp token, which receives only the fingerprint, and inserts it into the file. It is this token that fixes the date in a way opposable to a third party.
3. **Then:** the tool adds to the file the pieces that will allow the signature to be verified in fifty years without questioning anyone — the certificate chain and the day's revocation status.
4. **Finally:** sixty-four characters go to the register, which records them, brings them into the day's root, and anchors that root in the blockchain. You receive your Merkle path and your proof of anchoring.

Steps two to four are additions; they take nothing from the first, and their delay costs you nothing. One can sign in a village without network and complete three days later in town: the date retained is that of the signature, framed by the timestamp that says "at the latest".

The two chains of date proof, and how to read a document that has only one.

The **short chain** is that of step two: a standard timestamp token, inside the file. It is what commercial software reads, and that is why one must have it: without it, a reader will display the hour the signature *declares*, warning that it is unverified.

The **long chain** is that of step four, and it is ours: the signature certificate states the fingerprint of the document, and that certificate is itself anchored in a block. Whoever wishes to verify recomputes the fingerprint of the document, finds it written in the certificate, recomputes the fingerprint of the certificate, and finds it in a block no one rewrites. No authority is questioned, and the proof holds even if the software that produced it has vanished.

A document that has only the long chain is perfectly proven: it is merely less convenient, since one must leave the reader to verify it. A document that has only the short chain depends on a timestamping authority and on its preservation. Have both for what matters, and never confuse a program's warning with the absence of a proof.

IX. The renewal of the five days outside time

A 09 certificate is worth one Kamite year. It is renewed during the five days outside time, from 21 to 25 July, which belong to no month — the same five days for all the Kamites of the world.

The mechanism is memoryless, and that is what makes it robust. The rotation number of the key is the Kamite year: the key of the year 6264 derives with the label of the year 6264, that of 6265 with its own. There is nothing to note, nothing to count, nothing to keep from one year to the next: from the card and the name, any year recomputes, in order or out of order, today or in thirty years.

What the rite guarantees, and that no technique gave

Renewal requires the card and the name. Therefore **the annual rite is the annual verification that the secret is not lost.** This is the real contribution of the calendar, and one must measure what it settles: the ordinary catastrophe in these matters is not theft, it is the backup no one tested for ten years and that is found unreadable the day everything burns. Here, the man who has lost his card or let his name slip finds out during the five days, while his current key still works, and he has a whole window in which to make his declaration of continuity. The third case of the next chapter thus resolves itself, every year, without anyone having to think about it.

Entering in mid-year

One does not wait for July to have a key. The Kamite who registers on any day derives his key with the label of the current year, and his certificate is issued the same day: it runs until the close of the following window. His first year is simply shorter than the others, and that is all that entering in mid-year changes. At the first renewal he joins the common rhythm, and from then on his date of issue says nothing about him.

> **The clock precision, failing which one is a year out.** The Kamite year opens on 26 July; the five days outside time, from the 21st to the 25th, are the last of the year that is ending, not the first of the one to come. **Whoever renews during the window therefore derives the key of the year that opens, not of the year in which he stands.** That is the very object of the rite: to enter the new year with a key already made.

One seed, one year, one key

The computation has no counter, and that is deliberate: redoing the derivation in January with the same card and the same name gives back exactly the January key. It is this property that makes the telephone dropped in the lagoon a non-event. One therefore does not change key in mid-year without reason — and one has no need to, for the two cases in which one truly must, the lost card and the compromised key, both come with fresh twenty-four words: a fresh seed gives a fresh key under the same year label. Replacement in mid-year works without anything having been added to the computation.

The rite, and the grace

The minimal ceremony is within everyone's reach: wherever he is, during these five days, the Kamite cuts the network, takes out his card, says his name to himself again, re-derives his key for the year to come, requests his certificate, and puts everything away. Alone, without witness, without asking anyone's permission. A man in Bahia makes the same gesture as a man in Lassa, on the same day: that is what makes a people.

But the rite must not become a guillotine. **The key of year N remains valid until the end of the window of year N+1.** The man who is in hospital, travelling, detained or without a device during those five days does not lose his identity: he renews late, and the register records that it was late. What is recorded is not a fault, it is a fact.

And the day a man no longer renews at all, his identity goes out of itself, without anyone having to declare anything. It is the only extinction that works for a 09, since a 09 may be known to no one.

> **An unexpected benefit for the discreet 09.** When all the certificates of the Kamite world are issued in the same five-day window, the date of issue of a certificate says nothing about anyone. The common rhythm, which is first of all a liturgy, is also the best protection for the one who does not wish to be followed.

Use the rite, finally, to check the spelling of the name: accents, tones, capitals, spaces. A Bwamu name mis-accented fifteen years later, and the key does not come back. Once a year, one makes sure it still opens.

X. Replacing the key: the six cases

This is the chapter one must have read before needing it. In three of the six cases, the order of the gestures decides everything, and an error of order cannot be repaired.

First case – the chosen rotation, no incident

This is the ordinary case of annual renewal, or of moving to a new device. Nothing is compromised, the old key is still trustworthy: it is the old key that will serve to present the new one.

1. Derive the key of the new year from the card and the name.
2. With the old key, sign a **declaration of continuity**: a short document stating that the holder of such an identifier replaces, on such a date, such a public key by such another. Have it sealed and anchored.
3. Request the certificate of the new key.
4. Only then, revoke the old certificate.

The declaration of continuity is the piece that, in ten years, will prove that the two keys are those of the same man. Without it, a rotation looks exactly like a usurpation.

Second case – the device lost, card and name in hand

The most frequent, and the least grave. On a new device one re-derives the same key: one goes on signing, there is nothing to declare, the register has seen nothing.

> **Unless the device was poorly protected.** If the lost device required neither code nor biometrics, or was not encrypted, one does not re-derive the same key: one treats the matter as a compromise – fifth case – because one does not know who picked it up.

Third case — the card lost, or the name growing distant

The card has burned, been thrown away, become illegible; or the name no longer comes back with certainty. One can still sign, since the key is in the device — and that is why this case is dangerous: nothing is urgent in appearance, and everything is urgent in fact. The day that device fails, there is nothing left. One must act while the old key still works.

1. Redo the ceremony of the fifth chapter on a new or reset device: fresh twenty-four words, and the name — the same, if it is still safe; a fresh name received according to the rule of the house, if it is not.
2. With the old key, which is still alive, sign the declaration of continuity towards the new public key. Seal, anchor.
3. Have the new key certified, then revoke the old one.

Done in this order, the incident leaves no trace of weakness: the continuity is proven by a signature no one contests. Done too late, it becomes the fourth case. This is precisely what the rite of the five days serves to avoid.

Fourth case – everything lost

Neither card, nor name, nor device. There is no recovery, and there must be none: a service able to give you back your key would be a service able to give it to another.

What remains possible is to take up the identifier again with a fresh key, because the 09 designates a person and that person has not changed. But the binding of an identifier to a new key, without a signature from the old one, is no longer proven by computation: it becomes again an inscription upon evidence, and the register then requires the same appearance as at the first inscription. It is heavier, it is deliberately heavier, and it is the one place in the whole edifice where one falls back on human judgement.

What was signed before, by contrast, is not lost: the acts keep their date and their value. To lose one's key is to lose the faculty of signing tomorrow; it is never to lose what one signed yesterday.

Fifth case – the key compromised

Someone has seen the card and knows the name, or has had the device unlocked in his hands. Here the order of the gestures is reversed, and this is the most important point in the book.

> **Revoke first. Never sign a declaration of continuity from a compromised key.** The one who holds your key can also sign a declaration of continuity – towards his own key. He would then become your legitimate successor in the eyes of the register, and he could do it before you. A compromised key presents no one any more: it falls silent.

1. Revoke immediately, requesting revocation from the register or by the token. The minute counts.
2. Redo the full ceremony on a sound device: fresh twenty-four words, and a fresh name – a name another has known is no longer a name.
3. Present yourself to the register as in the fourth case: upon evidence, without invoking the old key.
4. Then check what may have been signed between the compromise and the revocation, and contest it if need be.

Sixth case – the disappearance of the holder

The 09 is not transmissible and does not survive. Since the name is known only to its bearer, this is no longer decreed: it is observed. The name departs with him, therefore the key departs with him. No heir, no witness, no service can reopen what is closed.

Two mechanisms record the end in the register. The first is **extinction by default**: for want of renewal in the five days, the identity ceases of itself, and it is the only one that works for an identity no one knows. The second is **the bwa code**, the one the elders keep in shares, gathered at *bwan bèssi robè* to tell the soul to depart and carried to the register to extinguish the identity that same day, without waiting for July. The quorum is required: one elder alone can do nothing.

The charges the deceased held, for their part, continue: the 08 is attached to another 09, upon evidence, by an inscription of the register. What disappears is the man; the houses and the charges continue.

XI. Why revocation does not erase the past

One objection always returns, and it is a just one: if a key is revoked, why do the documents signed with it remain valid? Would it not be enough to have one's key stolen to annul one's undertakings?

The answer holds in one word: timestamping. A revocation carries a date and an hour. A signed document carries an independent proof of its own date. If that proof shows the signature to be earlier than the revocation, the document remains valid; if it shows it to be later, the document is void.

And here one sees what the whole chain of timestamping is really for: without proof of date, a revocation would annul everything, retroactively. For want of knowing when you signed, an opponent could always claim it was after the theft. The timestamp token settles the question between people of good faith; the anchoring in the blockchain settles it against anyone at all, including against the one who holds the register, because a block is not rewritten.

Hence the discipline: anchor your important acts the same day. An act signed and not anchored is protected by the word of the register; an anchored act no longer needs anyone's word.

XII. The discreet 09

One man may hold two 09s and use them as his needs require: one identifier under which he appears, and another under which he works without appearing. The rule of the twelfth article holds both ways — no one is obliged to appear, no one is obliged to hide. But discretion is a discipline, not a checkbox, and it is lost through details that have nothing cryptographic about them.

What links two identities, in order of danger

1. **The key.** Two certificates carrying the same public key are linked in three seconds. So never the same key, and for a discreet 09: neither the same twenty-four words nor the same name. Two cards, two places, written on different days; two distinct names.
2. **The document.** This is the likeliest leak, far ahead of the key. A file trails behind it its producer, its fonts, its creation date, its

template; a document laid out with the house typography designates the house, whatever the signature. For the discreet identity: neutral output, cleaned metadata, no recognisable template.

3. **The certificate itself.** Same authority, same policy, same company name in the subject: three fields that bring two identities together without anyone needing the key. A 09 carries no company name, and a discreet identity gains by not sharing the other's certification policy.
4. **The rhythm.** If the discreet identity only ever signs a few minutes from the other, correlation does the work cryptography prevented. This cannot be corrected by technique. Renewal, by contrast, poses no such problem: everyone renews on the same five days.
5. **The serial numbers.** Two certificates issued in succession, by the same authority, at the same instant, join hands. Numbers drawn at random, and separate inscriptions — never within the same hour.
6. **Live verification.** If a reader questions the authority to learn whether a certificate is valid, the authority learns who verifies what. Hence the interest of embedding the revocation status in the file: the verifier no longer needs to telephone anyone.
7. **The register itself.** It must know two holders and no field that links them — not a shared contact, not a device identifier, not an "owner" column. A register that does not contain the link cannot deliver it.

The keeping and the end

Since the name is known to its bearer alone, the card of a discreet 09 can be stored without fear: found in an inheritance, it yields nothing. It is the name that closes the door, and it departs with the man. Sharing the secret among witnesses, which would be a solution for a charge, does not apply here: to entrust shares to five elders is to entrust one's discreet identity to five people, which is exactly what one wished to avoid.

Finally, if one wishes that one day certain acts signed under a discreet identity may be attached to oneself, it must be prepared while one lives: a declaration signed under the visible identity, dated and sealed today, which reveals nothing of the identity but enumerates the fingerprints one chooses to claim. One opens a narrow door, onto what one wants and nothing else, and one decides the moment oneself – or one leaves the declaration sealed, to be opened after one's time.

Testing your tool, and moving to the Kamite level

The act distinguishes three levels, and each is recognised by a single question: *what leaves the signatory's machine at the moment of signing?* At **level zero**, the document goes up and the key is with the provider. At **level one**, the document stays, but the key is still elsewhere. At the **Kamite level**, nothing goes out but the fingerprint, and the hand belongs to the holder.

Three tests are enough to situate any tool, and none requires being an engineer.

1. **The unplugging test.** Network cut, sign a file. If the signature is made, the key is with you. If it fails, it is elsewhere: level zero or one.
2. **The upload test.** Look at what the tool sends. If it asks you to *upload* the file, it is not sealing: it is depositing. A conforming tool never sends more than sixty-four characters, and must be able to show you so.
3. **The exit test.** Ask for a full export of your acts, your certificates and your proofs of anchoring, in open formats. If you must negotiate, pay or wait, you are captive, and the fifth article is not respected.

Most Kamites will begin at level zero or level one, with the tool they have to hand. That is no fault and no cause for drama: **an act signed at level zero remains a signed act**, its date remains proven, its fingerprint remains anchored, and nothing that has been sealed depreciates on the day one moves up a rung. What level zero does not give is the confidentiality of the document and the exclusivity of the hand; that is a great deal, but it is not validity.

The passage to the Kamite level is made by the first case of the tenth chapter, and there is nothing else to invent: one makes one's key according to the fifth chapter, signs a declaration of continuity with the old one, has the new one certified, revokes the old one. All the earlier acts remain attached to the man by that declaration. The best moment to do it is the window of the five days, since everyone renews then and no one notices anything.

> **What is not to be presumed.** The act says it without softening it, and this conduct will say nothing else: the Kamite level requires that the signature be produced on the holder's machine and that his key exist nowhere else but with him. Until that has been observed by an independent third party and recorded in the register, no implementation may call itself at the Kamite level — the house's own no more than any other. The observation is recorded with its date; and if it cannot be made, that too is recorded, with its date. Grant your trust only to what is recorded.

Aide-mémoire

The seven rules

1. The twenty-four words and the name are not passwords: together, they *are* the key.
2. Never photographed, never in anything that synchronises, never told to anyone, never typed on a keyboard that learns.
3. The card is not stored beside the device.
4. One key per identifier. Never two identifiers on one key.
5. Test your tool: network unplugged, the signature must be made.
6. Anchor your important acts the same day.
7. Renew in the five days outside time; that is also where one checks that the name still opens.

In case of incident, the right order

Situation	What is done, in this order
Chosen rotation, or annual renewal	New key → declaration of continuity signed by the old one → new certificate → revocation
Device lost, card and name in hand, device protected	Re-derive the same key on a new device. Nothing to declare.
Device lost and poorly protected	Treat as a compromise
Card lost, or name uncertain, device alive	Do not wait. New ceremony → declaration of continuity by the old key → new certificate → revocation
Key compromised	Revoke first. Then full ceremony, fresh name, and appearance before the register. No declaration of continuity.
Everything lost	Appearance before the register, upon evidence. Past acts remain valid.
Move to the Kamite level	As a chosen rotation, preferably during the five days
Disappearance	Non-renewal, or bwa code carried to the register by the quorum. The charges pass; the 09 does not.

Annex — the parameters to fix

So that two implementations written by two people who have never met will produce the same key from the same card and the same name, and signatures that every reader in the world accepts.

Element	Value retained, and why
Signature curve	**P-256** (secp256r1), SHA-256 digest. It is the only curve held by Apple's secure element and Android's StrongBox, and every PDF reader validates it. P-384 is admitted where the carrier supports it — hardware token, a sanctuary's security module — but never for a 09 whose key must live in a telephone. Bitcoin's curve would be a trap: almost no reader validates it.
The twenty-four words	Two hundred and fifty-six bits of entropy, standard list and checksum, drawn by the machine. They serve only to carry the number.
The name, twenty-fifth word	Combined with the twenty-four by a slow, memory-hungry function — Argon2id, published parameters — and not by the usual fast derivation. A name carries little randomness: each attempt must cost dearly to anyone who had the card and were guessing names.
Spelling of the name	A canonical form, fixed and published: Unicode normalisation, case, spaces, treatment of tones and accents. Without it, a Bwamu name re-entered fifteen years later does not open. Annual verification in the five days.
Derivation	HKDF-SHA256 over the seed obtained, salt `SCEAU-0`, label `09/<identifier>/sig/<Kamite year>`, forty-eight bytes reduced into the order of the curve. The rotation number is the Kamite year: no memory to keep. During the five days outside time, the label retained is that of the year

	opening on 26 July, not of the year in which one stands.
Certificate	X.509 v3. Subject: the title or name in use, and the 09 identifier as the subject serial number. No civil name, no company name, no email, no address, and never the name of the spirit. Usages: signature and non-repudiation; extended usage limited to document signing. Serial number drawn at random over at least sixty-four bits.
Validity	**One Kamite year**, opened during the five days outside time, plus the grace until the end of the following window. An inscription made in mid-year receives its certificate the same day, for a shortened first year ending at the close of the following window: one never waits for July in order to sign. A certificate of several years does not conform: it takes from the rite what makes it useful, which is to test each year that the secret still holds.
Document signature	PAdES container. Offline: baseline level. Then a timestamp token, then the long-term validation level, which embeds the chain and the revocation status so that verification needs no one.
Proof of date	Two chains, and both for what matters. The short chain: a standard timestamp token in the file, which receives only a fingerprint. The long chain: a certificate stating the fingerprint of the document, itself anchored in a block. Two different clocks, and that is intended.
Register line	Identifier, fingerprint of the certificate, Kamite date and universal time, nature of the act — origin-

	al creation or resumption. Append-only: nothing is ever removed.
Naming and certification	The SCEAU-0 register under the arc of the Bwa Sacré; the certification policy under the operator's arc, published and cited in every certificate. The identifier follows the holder, never the operator.
Revocation	Published list, and status embedded in signed documents. Avoid live querying, which informs the authority about the verifiers.
Bwa code (extinction token)	A secret drawn at random at inscription, distinct from the key and with no power of signature, displayed once then erased by the machine. Shared in parts according to a published threshold — three of five, four of seven — so that no keeper alone can act. The register records only its fingerprint, dated and anchored; the code never appears there. Never displayed in the holder's lifetime; published to all upon his death, and that publication is the extinction, verifiable by anyone against the fingerprint recorded at the origin.

Solemn Conclusion

I close here the third volume, and I close it as one looks at a man who has just risen: checking that he holds on both legs, and that he needs no one to hold him up.

We began with the gesture. For years we were told: you have no book, you have no liturgy, you have nothing to put in the place of what we ask you to leave. The *Books of Lassa* answer, and they answer without borrowing: a rite of the day, a rite of the moon, a rite of the year; twelve moons for the apprentice, the libation for the Kamite, the sanctuary and the charge for the sage. We said where this comes from — the Bwa country, the neighbours, the three ceremonies that make a man — and we did not invent it: we wrote it down, which is not the same thing. And we looked at the age to come without fear, because a people that has a rite of the day can receive any machine whatever without losing itself inside it.

Then we took the word, and we took it on what offends. We said that the blade returns a fourth time and that the ordered retreat is not a defeat. We said that our parents' work cannot be delegated, and that the Kamite engineer must go ahead, not behind. We said that Kamite peoples set their own priorities, and that one does not compare the dead. We said what Kamitism is: not one more religion, but a federation of spiritualities that holds precisely because it demands of no one that he give up his own. We said our place among the revealed religions, at home and where they are the majority. We reopened the palaver tree, and showed that judgment was rendered without prison. We opened the door to those who return, without asking them to account for themselves. And we said

to our own, from one State to another, that the neighbour is the brother — for no one will reconcile Côte d'Ivoire with itself, nor the Sahel with its neighbours, in the place of those who live there.

And we finished with the proof, because it is what had been missing from the start. A people without writing depends on the memory of others; a people that writes without dating depends on their good faith; a people that dates but whose key is in the hands of a third party still depends on him. *The Seal* closes the three holes at once: a register of our own, an identifier of our own, a time of our own — ours, that of the twelve months of thirty days and the five days outside time — and three clearly named levels, of which only one deserves the name Kamite: the one where nothing leaves but the fingerprint, and where the hand stays with the one who bears it. *The Key of the Kamite* did the rest: it put the thing within reach of a man alone, with twenty-four words, a name he tells no one, and renewal in the five days outside time. What the State does with servers, the Kamite can now do with his memory.

One thread runs through these fifteen writings, and I can now draw it out whole: **the first volume showed what had been taken from us; the second showed that nothing had been lost; this one shows that a Kamite can now stand alone before the world, with a gesture that is his own, a word that is his own, and a proof that no one grants him.** That is the whole difference between a people that is recognised and a people that recognises itself.

Let what this changes be measured. A man standing no longer needs to be believed: he shows. He no longer asks for his name to be given back: he signs it. He no longer asks for his writings to be

dated: he dates them himself, and the date holds without us, without them, and after us all. He no longer asks for a liturgy: he has one, dated, written, whose author is known — and I still hold that a book whose author is known is worth more than a book whose origin must be believed.

Much remains to be done, and I do not hide it. The registers must fill; the sanctuaries must hold; the jatigi must accompany those who enter, moon after moon; and the Kamite standard of signature must pass from our pages into the tools our engineers will write. None of this can be decreed. But all of it now has a text, a date and a seal.

Let our children know it, and let them never again have to lower their eyes: **they do not descend from a people without rite, without word and without proof. They descend from a people that, having lost all three, took them back — and wrote them down.**

The gesture is given back. The word is spoken. The proof is sealed. The Kamite stands.

Amen Hotep — Amenhotep.

KING BAZURU
Venerable and President of the Kamites
Abidjan, 2026 — year 6263 of the Kamite era

After this volume, there is no excuse left.

General Bibliography

This bibliography gathers, chapter by chapter, the verifiable references to which the fifteen writings refer: classical sources and historical works, legal texts and public standards, published statistics, open protocols, and our own writings, all dated and sealed. It is indicative, not exhaustive: it brings together what nourished the author's reflection, or what he invites the reader to verify for himself. The first three chapters are an exception: their list is not a bibliography but the order of reading imposed on whoever crosses the threshold.

Chapter One – The Threshold

The Apprentice's Writings

The apprentice reads one writing per moon, in the order below, with his jatigi. All are published by the Bwa Sacré, signed and anchored, in French and in English, at bwa-sacre.org.

The twelve moons

First moon: *The Secret Revealed* (May 27, 2026) – African resistance and the meaning of the marks. Second: *The Invisible Ledger* (June 12, 2026) – the name as register. Third: *The Sacred Protocols* (June 12, 2026) – protocol and ornament. Fourth: *The Devil Always Wears Our Face* and *The Price of Silence* (June 10, 2026) – the painted devil and the secret.

Fifth moon: *The House Without a Door* (August 23, 2026) – hospitality and djatiguiya. Sixth: *The Feast of the Worker* (August 21, 2026) – the five days. Seventh: *The Kamite Pilgrimage* (September 2, 2026) – the calendar and the pilgrimage. Eighth: *My Mother's Tongue* (September 4, 2026) – the language as last register.

Ninth moon: *The Queen Mothers* (September 4, 2026) – the Kamite woman as institution. Tenth: *The Door of Return* (September 4, 2026) – the diaspora and the name given back. Eleventh: *The Palaver Tree* and *The Written Land* (September 4, 2026) – the palaver, the land of the Ancest-

ors and the book of the homeland. Twelfth: *The Book of Answers*, volumes I and II (August 31, 2026) — the answers to objections, to be reread before the passage.

The Three Books of Lassa

KING BAZURU, *The Threshold* (book of the Apprentice), *The Libation* (book of the Kamite), *The Baobab* (book of the Sage), Abidjan, September 4, 2026 — Bwa Sacré, bwa-sacre.org. The calendar of full moons is calculated for the Greenwich meridian, the hour of Abidjan and Bamako, and published each year by the sages at the full moon of August.

Chapter II — The Libation

The Kamite's Writings

The Kamite has read the twelve writings of the apprentice. He rereads these, which found each of the rites and charges of this book, and he keeps them within reach.

The rites and the charges

The Sacred Protocols (June 12, 2026) — the institution as protocol, protocol and ornament. *The Invisible Ledger* (June 12, 2026) — the name, the register, the striking off. *The Price of Silence* (June 10, 2026) — the sacred and the secret. *The Stealers of Women* (June 12, 2026) — the union, consent, the absence of bride-price, the daughter of the village.

The House Without a Door (August 23, 2026) — djatiguiya, the host who answers on his name. *The Feast of the Worker* (August 21, 2026) and *The Kamite Pilgrimage* (September 2, 2026) — the five days, day by day, and the calendar. *The Door of Return* (September 4, 2026) — the jatigi of return and the name given back.

My Mother's Tongue (September 4, 2026) — the rule of the house, the register of voices, the name in the language. *The Palaver Tree* (September 4, 2026) — the palaver before the complaint, amends, striking off. *The Queen Mothers* (September 4, 2026) — the queen mother, the name of

the mothers, the sanctuary's tontine, the net. *The Written Land* (September 4, 2026) — the three owners, the book of the homeland, the name of women. *The Other Front* (September 4, 2026) — the count of the mothers and the transport of the woman in labour. *The Sacred Wood* (September 5, 2026) — the wood, its boundary, its prohibition and its keeper.

The Three Books of Lassa

KING BAZURU, *The Threshold* (book of the Apprentice), *The Libation* (book of the Kamite), *The Baobab* (book of the Sage), Abidjan, September 4, 2026 — Bwa Sacré, bwa-sacre.org.

Chapter III — The Baobab

The Sage's Writings

The sage keeps within reach the three books and all the writings, for each rite of this book has its source there, and that is where he sends those who ask why.

The sources of the charge

The Price of Silence (June 10, 2026) — the sacred, the secret, what is not written. *The Sacred Protocols* (June 12, 2026) — the four conditions of the institution. *The Invisible Ledger* (June 12, 2026) — the register, the striking off, the reintegration. *The House Without a Door* (August 23, 2026) — the djatiguiya of the pilgrimage and of the return.

The Feast of the Worker (August 21, 2026), *The Kamite Pilgrimage* (September 2, 2026) — the five days, the calendar, TRAVAILLEUR-0. *The Door of Return* (September 4, 2026) — the name given back and the day of the Door. *My Mother's Tongue* (September 4, 2026) — the register of voices and its deposit.

The Palaver Tree (September 4, 2026) — the ten stages of the palaver. *The Queen Mothers* (September 4, 2026) — the queen mother, the tontine, July 21. *The Written Land* (September 4, 2026) — the book of the homeland, the sacred wood written, TERRA-0. *The Other Front* (September 4, 2026) — the count of the mothers. *The Sacred Wood* (September 5,

2026) — the wood, its boundary, its prohibition and its keeper. *The Book of Answers*, I and II (August 31, 2026) — the answers the sage must know how to give.

The seal of the registers and the Three Books

The fingerprint of a register is computed with the SHA-256 function and anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain through the OpenTimestamps protocol, free and verifiable by anyone; that is how all the writings of the Bwa Sacré are sealed, and this book itself. KING BAZURU, *The Threshold*, *The Libation*, *The Baobab*, Abidjan, September 4, 2026 — Bwa Sacré, bwa-sacre.org.

Chapter IV — The Sacred Wood

This book rests first on what the author saw and received in the Bwa country, which is written nowhere else. The references below allow what can be verified to be verified: the history, the geography, the neighbours. They are indicative, not exhaustive.

The Bwa country

Jean Capron, *Communautés villageoises bwa, Mali – Haute-Volta*, vol. I, Paris, Institut d'ethnologie, 1973 — the organization of the villages, the assembly of the quarters, the absence of central power. Cécile Leguy, "Le nom secret chez les Bwa (Mali)," LLACAN (CNRS) note, and her studies of naming among the Bwa of Mali — the custom of the spirit name, under the name the ethnologists give it. Stéphan Dugast, "Apparitions et figurations de l'invisible chez les Bwaba du Burkina Faso," *Journal des Africanistes*, 86, 2016 — the human ancestors (*miɛba*) and their house, the sacrifices at funerals; and his work on the leaf masks of the Bwaba of Bondoukuy. Nazi Boni, *Crépuscule des temps anciens*, Paris, Présence Africaine, 1962 — the Bwa novel of the life before, and of the war.

The war of 1915-1916

Patrick Royer, "La guerre coloniale du Bani-Volta, 1915-1916 (Burkina Faso, Mali)," *Autrepart*, 26, 2003, pp. 35-51 — the causes, the supra-ethnic character, the forces engaged, the repression, the toll. Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire. Culture and History in the Volta-Bani Anticolonial War*, Athens (Ohio) and Oxford, 2001 — the reference study. Bernard Souyris, *Oppression coloniale et résistance en Haute-Volta : la région de la boucle du Mouhoun (1885-1935)*. The family account reported in chapter II is the author's own; it claims not the exactness of the archives but the fidelity of memory.

The Dogon neighbours

Marcel Griaule, *Masques dogons*, Paris, Institut d'ethnologie, 1938; *Dieu d'eau. Entretiens avec Ogotemmêli*, Paris, 1948. Germaine Dieterlen, work on the dama and the Sigui; Jean Rouch and Germaine Dieterlen, films of the Sigui and *Le dama d'Ambara*. On Dogon fame and the criticisms made of Griaule (Walter van Beek), see the studies of Griaulian ethnology. The comparison with *bwan bèssi robè* and *oro lainu* is the author's.

The writings of the Bwa Sacré

The Price of Silence, *The Sacred Protocols*, *The Invisible Ledger*, *The Stealers of Women*, *Before the Greeks, Before Rome* (June 2026); *The House Without a Door*, *The Book of Answers*, *The Door of Return*, *The Palaver Tree* (August-September 2026); *The Threshold*, *The Libation*, *The Baobab* (September 4, 2026). SHA-256 fingerprint anchored in the Bitcoin blockchain through OpenTimestamps — bwa-sacre.org.

Chapter V — The Kamite of Tomorrow

This volume does not ask to be taken on trust. The identifiers are public, our writings are dated and sealed. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

The worker and his identifier

TRAVAILLEUR-0, Private Enterprise Number (PEN) 65898 in the registry of the IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority), alongside TERRA-0 (PEN 65897), Pixel AI (PEN 65877) and the author (PEN 65878) — public registry of Private Enterprise Numbers, iana.org. The principle "take care of the worker, not of the work" is that of the Feast of the Worker and of the tools built on TRAVAILLEUR-0.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *The Feast of the Worker*, August 21, 2026 — the five days given back to the worker, July 23, "the worker remains when the work goes away"; *The Kamite Pilgrimage*, September 2, 2026 — the Age of Aquarius and the calendar; *The Queen Mothers*, September 4, 2026 — the sanctuary tontine under the guard of the queen mother; *The Libation*, September 4, 2026 — chapter VIII (the Kamite's part in the institutions), chapter X (the house with two doors); *The Baobab*, September 4, 2026 — chapter VIII (the register and the seal); *The Sacred Wood*, September 5, 2026 — chapter X (the Age of Aquarius and the changes assumed).

Artificial intelligence and work

The books of this series were prepared with the help of an artificial intelligence and signed without it, under the seal of the title: it is the measure of chapter VI applied to our own books. The author defended the Internet in 1995 and social networks in 2019; he defends artificial intelligence in 2026 with this one.

Chapter VI — The Fourth Jihad

This volume does not ask to be believed on its word. The dates are published, the head of state's word is on film, our own writings are dated and sealed. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

The word of September 4, 2026

Day of School Excellence 2026, Ouagadougou, September 4, 2026: address by Captain Ibrahim Traoré, President of Faso, before the 188 laureates – Government Information Service of Burkina Faso (gouvernement.gov.bf), Sidwaya, Burkina 24; video excerpt circulated on social networks.

The four jihads

Ghana and the Almoravids: Nehemia Levtzion, *Ancient Ghana and Mali*, London, Methuen, 1973; David Conrad and Humphrey Fisher, "The Conquest That Never Was: Ghana and the Almoravids, 1076," *History in Africa*, 9-10, 1982-1983 (the debate on the form of the conquest). Sundiata, Kirina and the charter of Kouroukan Fouga (c. 1235-1236): Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Sundiata: An Epic of Old Mali*, Longman, 1965 (French original 1960; the sister sent to Sosso, the cock's spur, Soumaoro's flight to Koulikoro); Youssouf Tata Cissé and Wa Kamissoko, *La Grande Geste du Mali*, Karthala, 1988. El Hadj Omar Tall (1852-1864) and the Toucouleur state of Segou; Samory Touré, Almami in 1884, captured at Guélémou on September 29, 1898: Yves Person, *Samori. Une révolution dyula*, IFAN, 1968-1975; David Robinson, *The Holy War of Umar Tal*, Oxford, 1985. The emperor of the ocean and Mansa Musa: Ibn Fadl Allah al-Umari, *Masalik al-absar* (c. 1337-1338), from the account given in Cairo in 1324 – the predecessor's two fleets, the regency, the pilgrimage and the fall in the price of gold; Ibn Khaldun, *Kitab al-Ibar*. The Catalan Atlas of 1375 (Majorca, attributed to Abraham Cresques), offered to the King of France, Bibliothèque nationale de France; the king of Mali holds a gold nugget in it. The Portuguese: rounding of Cape Bojador (1434), first captives landed at Lagos (1444) – Gomes Eanes de Zurara, *Chronicle of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*. Slavery in the country of Koumbi Saleh: abolished in 1981, criminalized in 2007 and 2015, still recorded by United Nations rapporteurs. Nkrumah's Ghana: independence on March 6, 1957, the empire's name taken up for the Gold Coast. The United Nations resolution: General Assembly, March 25, 2026, resolution A/

80/L.48 championed by Ghana and the African Union, declaring the trafficking and racialized chattel enslavement of Africans "the gravest crime against humanity" – 123 votes in favor, 3 against, 52 abstentions. The war of 1915-1916: Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire*, Ohio University Press, 2001; by the same, "La guerre coloniale du Bani-Volta, 1915-1916," *Autrepart*, 26, 2003, p. 36: "the French, few in number, had made use of the heads of houses of Muslim obedience," "Fulbe of Barani and Dokuy located between the Bani and the Volta" – about 5,000 soldiers, six cannons, four machine-gun units. Today's recruitment: International Crisis Group, Africa Report No. 276, "Speaking with the 'Bad Guys': Toward Dialogue with Central Mali's Jihadists," May 28, 2019 (the Katiba Macina, Fulani herders and Quranic-school pupils, recorded sermons). The fourth: fall of northern Mali (2012), attacks in Ouagadougou (January 2016), Grand-Bassam (March 2016), Kafolo (June 2020, then 2021), Téhini and Tougbo (2021) – International Crisis Group reports and the press of the three countries.

Einstein's sentence

Albert Einstein, preface to Josep Maria Corredor, *Conversations avec Pablo Casals*, Paris, Albin Michel, 1955 (text dated March 1955, one month before his death): "the world is in greater peril from those who tolerate or encourage evil than from those who actually commit it." The popular form ("the world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch without doing anything") is a paraphrase of it.

The memory of the families

The horse recognized at the market, the mountain village where the chiefs were gathered, the attack at four in the morning, the songs of Bazani Théra: memory of the author's family, reported as it is, as in *La Génération non présentée*. It joins what the archives say of the auxiliaries of Barani and Dokuy.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *The Sacred Wood*, September 5, 2026, augmented edition of September 6 — chapter II (the peoples without walls, up to 1915), chapter IV (Bwamu, one language over a thousand kilometers); *The Threshold*, September 4, 2026 — chapter IX (the first name, the mosque and the church); *The Libation*, September 4, 2026 — chapter IX (the rule of the name); *The Queen Mothers*, September 4, 2026, corrected edition of September 5 — the opening of the Bwa Sacré to women; *The Kamite of Tomorrow*, September 6, 2026 — the child of first grade; *La Génération non présentée*, September 6, 2026 — the third road and the measure of war.

Chapter VII — Our Parents' Work

This volume does not ask to be believed on trust. The trades described exist, the figures are published, our own writings are dated and sealed. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

The engineer who goes forward

The trade of *forward deployed engineer* was born at Palantir Technologies (then in California, today in Denver, United States) in the early 2010s, to deploy its software in administrations and armed forces; it is described by its co-founder and chief executive Alexander C. Karp, with Nicholas W. Zamiska, in *The Technological Republic*, Crown Currency, 2025. Since 2024 the principal artificial intelligence houses (OpenAI, Anthropic, Scale AI, Mistral, among others) have been recruiting under this title, as have many young companies; the published postings describe work at the client's premises, integration with existing data and systems, and the feeding back of needs into the product.

The figures of work

World Economic Forum, *Future of Jobs Report 2025*, Geneva, January 2025: 170 million jobs created and 92 million eliminated worldwide between 2025 and 2030, a net balance of 78 million; 39 % of current skills

transformed or outdated by 2030. John Maynard Keynes, “Economic Possibilities for our Grandchildren”, 1930 (the fifteen-hour week foreseen for 2030). Aristotle, *Politics*, book I, chapter 4 (the shuttles that would weave of themselves), cited in “The Feast of the Worker”.

The rank and the function

The rank of state design engineer (five years beyond the baccalaureate, engineering schools) and that of works engineer (three or four years), as defined by the civil service statutes and the texts of the engineering schools of Mali, Burkina Faso and Côte d’Ivoire. The Abidjan factory and the Bamako factory: the author’s professional experience, reported as such.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *The Feast of the Worker*, August 21, 2026 – the shuttle that weaves by itself, celebrating the worker and not the work, the TRAVAILLEUR-0 register (IANA PEN 65898); *The Kamite of Tomorrow*, September 6, 2026 – the Kamite does not take a salary, artificial intelligence as companion of the Age of Aquarius; *The Age of Aquarius*, June 11, 2026; BAZURU, *A Solemn Call to All Kamites*, September 12, 2026.

Chapter VIII – The Kamite Position

This declaration does not ask to be believed on trust. The facts cited are public and sourced; the figures are those of the institutions that establish them, at the date indicated; the judgements are our own and are owned as such. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

The proceedings before the International Court of Justice

South Africa v. Israel, application instituting proceedings filed on December 29, 2023 under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948); orders indicating provisional measures of January 26, March 28 and May 24, 2024; South Africa’s Memorial

filed within the time-limit of October 28, 2024; Israel's Counter-Memorial filed within the extended time-limit of March 12, 2026; order of May 21, 2026 fixing the Reply for November 22, 2027 and the Rejoinder for May 22, 2029; the case is pending and the merits have not been decided – International Court of Justice (icj-cij.org); United Nations, Division for Palestinian Rights (un.org/unispal).

Sudan, Congo, the Sahel

Sudan: war in its fourth year as of April 2026; siege of El Fasher until the fall of the city on October 26, 2025 and documented massacres in Darfur (Human Rights Watch, October 29, 2025); IPC classification: famine confirmed in El Fasher and Kadugli, some twenty further areas at risk, close to 19.5 million people in acute food insecurity; UNHCR (largest displacement crisis in the world). Democratic Republic of the Congo: conflicts in the East since 1996, mortality estimates in the millions (International Rescue Committee, *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Ongoing Crisis*, 2008; subsequent methodological debate); sexual violence documented in successive United Nations reports. Sahel: school closures and displacement – International Crisis Group and UNICEF reports. Rwanda: genocide against the Tutsi, April-July 1994.

The Red Sea and the Suez Canal

Attacks on shipping in the Red Sea from November 2023; large-scale diversion around the Cape of Good Hope; collapse of Suez Canal traffic and loss of Egyptian revenue; rise in freight rates and insurance premiums, passed on to African imports; partial and incomplete recovery in 2026 – Suez Canal Authority, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), marine insurers and the shipping press.

Africa in this conflict: 1973-2022

Severance of diplomatic relations with Israel by almost every African state after the war of October 1973, under the auspices of the Organisation of African Unity; progressive restoration from 1982. Military and industrial cooperation between Israel and apartheid South Africa in the

1970s and 1980s; visit of the South African prime minister to Israel in 1976 — Sasha Polakow-Suransky, *The Unspoken Alliance: Israel's Secret Relationship with Apartheid South Africa*, Pantheon, 2010, and declassified archives. The Abraham Accords: Sudan-Israel normalisation announced in October 2020 in exchange for removal from the American list of state sponsors of terrorism; Morocco-Israel normalisation of December 10, 2020, accompanied by United States recognition of Moroccan sovereignty over Western Sahara, a non-self-governing territory on the agenda of the United Nations. African Union: observer status granted to Israel by the Commission in July 2021, contested by several member states; decision frozen at the February 2022 summit and referred to a committee.

Anti-Black hatred: documented facts

Libya: auctions of African migrants filmed in November 2017; possible crimes against humanity according to the Secretary-General of the United Nations; referral to the Security Council. Mauritania: slavery abolished in 1981, criminalised in 2007 and 2015; practices still recorded by United Nations special rapporteurs. Gulf: the *kafala* sponsorship system and passport confiscation (International Labour Organization). Eastern slave trades: trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean trades, thirteen centuries — Ralph A. Austen, *Trans-Saharan Africa in World History*, Oxford University Press, 2010; Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa*, Cambridge University Press, 1983 (3rd ed. 2011); closure of the Zanzibar market in 1873, following the treaty concluded with Sultan Barghash. Israel: Operation Moses (1984) and Operation Solomon (1991); protests by Ethiopian Israelis against discrimination and police violence; the donated-blood controversy (1996); regime applied to Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers (Holot facility). Resolution 80/250 of the United Nations General Assembly, March 25, 2026, declaring the trade and racial enslavement of Africans the gravest crime against humanity (non-binding text).

Africans killed in this conflict

Clemence Mtenga and Joshua Mollel, Tanzanian agricultural interns, killed on October 7, 2023 in southern Israel; the remains of Joshua Mollel, held in Gaza, were returned in November 2025 under the ceasefire agreement and buried in Tanzania – Tanzanian authorities, Israeli and international press. Afro-Palestinian communities of Gaza and Jerusalem, descended from older African migrations: international press reporting, 2016-2024; no separate count of their dead has been published.

Humanitarian aid and attention

Chronic underfunding of humanitarian appeals for Sudan, Chad, the Sahel and the Horn of Africa, and cuts in food rations: reports of the World Food Programme and of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), response plans 2024-2026. Comparative coverage rates: occupied Palestinian territory appeal 2024, 84.3% ($2.89bn of $3.42bn); Sudan response plan 2024, 70.7% ($1.90bn of $2.70bn); Sudan response plan 2025, about 50% (nearly $1.5bn of $3.01bn) – OCHA Financial Tracking Service (fts.unocha.org).

The diaspora and the two memories

Convergence between Black American movements and the Palestinian cause from Ferguson (2014). *Freedom Summer*, Mississippi, June 1964: murder of James Chaney, Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner; the Selma march, March 1965, and the participation of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel alongside Martin Luther King.

Non-alignment and international justice

Asian-African Conference, Bandung, April 18-24, 1955; Non-Aligned Movement, Belgrade, 1961; Organisation of African Unity, Addis Ababa, May 25, 1963. International Criminal Court: every investigation opened until January 2016 concerned an African situation, the first investigation outside Africa (Georgia) having been authorised on January 27, 2016; debate on collective withdrawal within the African

Union (2016-2017). The proverb of the elephants and the grass is attested in Swahili and in several languages of East Africa.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

BAZURU, *A Solemn Call to All Kamites*, September 12, 2026 — languages, memory, artificial intelligence; *Our Parents' Work*, September 12, 2026 — the worker and the machine; KING BAZURU, *The Fourth Jihad*, September 7, 2026 (edition of the 8th) — the peoples of the interior, the four roads of the blade and the resolution of March 25, 2026; *The Kamite of Tomorrow*, September 6, 2026; *The Sacred Wood*, September 5, 2026, augmented edition of the 6th — the sacred forest and the village without walls; *The Feast of the Worker*, August 21, 2026.

Chapter IX — Kamite, Who Are You?

This declaration does not ask to be believed on trust. What belongs to the doctrine of the Bwa Sacré is signed and dated; what belongs to fact is published and verifiable; what belongs to the secret is not here. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

Ifá, binary and numeration

Ifá divination system of the Yoruba: proclaimed a masterpiece of the oral and intangible heritage of humanity by UNESCO in 2005, inscribed on the representative list in 2008; corpus of 256 *odù* obtained from eight binary marks; work of Ron Eglash, *African Fractals*, Rutgers University Press, 1999, on the African origin of two-valued divination systems and their diffusion towards the Arab world and then Europe; recent studies on the algebraic characterisation of the Ifá codes. Yoruba numeration in base twenty and by subtraction: work of Claudia Zaslavsky, *Africa Counts*, 1973, and Helen Verran, *Science and an African Logic*, 2001.

The languages

Taa (!xóõ), Botswana and Namibia: the language holding the largest known consonant inventory, with five click families; surveys by the DoBeS

project and by Tom Güldemann, record recognised by *Guinness World Records*. Tonal languages of West Africa, Bantu noun classes: handbooks of African linguistics (Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse, *African Languages: An Introduction*, Cambridge, 2000). Amadou Hampâté Bâ, address to UNESCO, 1960: "in Africa, when an old man dies, a library burns".

The masks and the museums

Pablo Picasso's visit to the ethnographic museum of the Trocadéro, Paris, 1907, and *Les Demoiselles d'Avignon*; Picasso's conversations with André Malraux, *La Tête d'obsidienne*, 1974. Felwine Sarr and Bénédicte Savoy, *Report on the Restitution of African Cultural Heritage*, Paris, November 2018; estimates of the African collections held in European museums.

The houses cited

Dogon: Marcel Griaule, *Dieu d'eau*, 1948, and Germaine Dieterlen; critical re-reading by Walter van Beek, *Current Anthropology*, 1991 – the debate itself is part of the file. Bamanan: successive societies of initiation, work of Dominique Zahan. Senufo: the *poro*. Vodun: the Bight of Benin and its American extensions, work of Suzanne Preston Blier. Bwiti: Gabon, work of James Fernandez. Bwa: Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire*, 2001; and our own writings below.

The two faults, and the threats

Cajamarca, November 16, 1532: the capture of Atahualpa by Francisco Pizarro and one hundred and sixty-eight men – chronicles of Francisco de Xerez and Pedro Pizarro; John Hemming, *The Conquest of the Incas*, 1970. Cortés's entry into Tenochtitlan, November 1519, and the death of Moctezuma II in 1520 – Bernal Díaz del Castillo; Hugh Thomas, *Conquest*, 1993. Mansa Musa's pilgrimage of 1324 and the collapse of the gold price in Cairo: al-Umari, *Masalik al-absar*; Catalan Atlas of 1375 (Majorca, attributed to Abraham Cresques), Bibliothèque nationale de France. The Volta-Bani war, 1915-1916, the largest armed insurrection in French West Africa: Mahir Şaul and Patrick Royer, *West African Challenge to Empire*, 2001. Genocide of the Herero and the Nama, 1904-1908, recognised by Germany in May 2021; genocide

against the Tutsi in Rwanda, April-July 1994. Papal bulls *Dum Diversas* (1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (1455), foundation of the so-called doctrine of discovery, repudiated by the Holy See on March 30, 2023 (joint statement of the Dicasteries for Culture and Education and for Promoting Integral Human Development). Witchcraft accusations against children and violent "exorcisms": reports of UNICEF (2010) and of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; violence against persons with albinism: reports of the United Nations Independent Expert.

The cradle of humanity

African origin of *Homo sapiens*: remains from Jebel Irhoud, Morocco, dated to about 300,000 years (Hublin et al., *Nature*, 2017); Omo Kibish, Ethiopia, redated to about 230,000 years (*Nature*, 2022); consensus of population genetics on the African origin of present-day human populations.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *The Sacred Wood*, September 5, 2026, augmented edition of the 6th — the village without walls, the sacred forest, the three ceremonies, the single language of the Bwa country, the sixth article on presentation; *The Threshold*, *The Libation*, *The Baobab*, September 4, 2026; *The Kamite of Tomorrow*, September 6, 2026; *The Fourth Jihad*, September 7, 2026 (edition of the 8th) — what used to be called animism and maximal tolerance; BAZURU, *A Solemn Call to All Kamites*, September 12, 2026 — languages, memory and the limit of what may be disclosed; *The Kamite Position*, September 13, 2026.

Chapter X — The Kamites Before the Revealed Religions

This declaration does not ask to be believed on trust. The facts cited are public and sourced; the judgements are our own and are owned as such. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

Accused children, banished women

Witchcraft accusations against children in West and Central Africa: UNICEF, *Children Accused of Witchcraft. An Anthropological Study of Contemporary Practices in Africa*, Dakar, 2010; reports of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and of UNICEF on Akwa Ibom State (Nigeria) and on Kinshasa; Akwa Ibom Child Rights Act (2008), which punishes the accusation of witchcraft made against a child. The role of religious propaganda films produced in Nigeria in the late nineteen-nineties: press investigations and the work of child-protection organisations in the Niger delta, which name one of them. Ghana: camps of accused women (Gambaga, Kukuo, Gnani); bill criminalising witchcraft accusations passed by Parliament in July 2023, never assented to; Amnesty International, *Branded for Life*, 2025.

Destruction of heritage

Destruction of the mausoleums of Timbuktu (Mali) in 2012 by armed groups; *The Prosecutor v. Ahmad Al Faqi Al Mahdi*, International Criminal Court, judgment and sentence of September 27, 2016 – the first International Criminal Court conviction for the war crime of attacking cultural and religious property, and the first international case in which that crime was the sole charge; reparations order of August 17, 2017. Bans on mask dances and drumming in the areas held: reports of International Crisis Group and MINUSMA. Public burnings of sacred objects organised by the missions in Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: work in mission history and material culture.

Vocabulary and categories

Portuguese origin of *feitiço* and the invention of the category of "fetishism": Charles de Brosses, *Du culte des dieux fétiches*, 1760; William Pietz, "The Problem of the Fetish", *Res*, 1985-1988. Invention of "animism": Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, 1871. Critique of these categories: contemporary Africanist anthropology.

The economy of worship

Rwanda: closure of several thousand places of worship from 2018 for non-compliance with safety and hygiene standards, and the requirement of a degree in theology for pastors (2018 law on faith-based organisations); a further wave of closures in 2024 – Rwanda Governance Board; international and religious press. The economy of the tithe, of so-called seed offerings and of paid services in African neo-Pentecostal assemblies: Ruth Marshall, *Political Spiritualities*, 2009, and the work of Paul Gifford on African public Christianity.

What science has confirmed

Animal self-medication (zoopharmacognosy): the work of Michael A. Huffman on the chimpanzees of Mahale (Tanzania) and their use of *Vernonia amygdalina* against intestinal parasites; geophagy observed in gorillas and other primates. *Moringa oleifera*, called *mansa yiri* ("the tree of the king") in the author's country: nutritional composition of the leaves (protein, calcium, iron, vitamins A and C) established by food composition tables and agronomic research; its use in programmes against malnutrition. Genealogy and DNA: the whole genome is present in every nucleated cell; the analysis of paternal and maternal lines and of geographic origins is now standard practice in population genetics.

Côte d'Ivoire

Religious distribution according to the 2021 general census of population and housing (National Institute of Statistics, data published on data.gouv.ci): Muslims and Christians of comparable weight, African traditions being heavily under-declared for want of an adequate category. The nature of the Ivorian crisis of 2002-2011: work on *ivoirité*, rural land tenure and citizenship (Jean-Pierre Chauveau, Richard Banégas, Ruth Marshall-Fratani), establishing the political and land-related character of the conflict rather than a religious one.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *The Devil Always Wears Our Face*, tribune of June 10, 2026 — the demonisation of African spiritualities in our own cinemas; *The Sacred Wood*, September 5, 2026, augmented edition of the 6th — the three ceremonies, the masks and the rule of the name; *The Fourth Jihad*, September 7, 2026 (edition of the 8th); *A Solemn Call to All Kamites*, September 12, 2026 — the securing of the languages; BAZURU, *Kamite, Who Are You?*, September 13, 2026 — the federation, tolerance as structure, and defence; *The Kamite Position*, September 13, 2026.

Chapter XI — Judging Without Prison

This declaration does not ask to be believed on trust. The institutions described are documented by ethnography and comparative law; the reforms cited are public; the judgements are our own. The list is indicative, not exhaustive.

The institutions

Charter of Kurukan Fuga (c. 1235-1236), inscribed by UNESCO on the intangible cultural heritage of humanity in 2009; Djibril Tamsir Niane, *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue*, 1960; Youssouf Tata Cissé and Wa Kamissoko, *La Grande Geste du Mali*, 1988. Joking kinship (*sanankuya*): the work of Étienne Smith and Cécile Canut on its defusing role. The *gada* system of the Oromo: inscribed by UNESCO in 2016 as an "indigenous democratic socio-political system"; age classes, eight-year terms, legislative general assembly. Somali *xeer*: customary law of compensation, work in the legal anthropology of the Horn. *Kgotla* and customary courts of Botswana: *Customary Courts Act*; Isaac Schapera, *A Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, 1938. Lozi courts: Max Gluckman, *The Judicial Process among the Barotse of Northern Rhodesia*, 1955 (the reasonable-man standard). *Bashingantahe* of Burundi; Acholi *mato oput* (Uganda). Leopard-skin chief: E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*, 1940. Yoruba *ogboni*, Igbo *umuada*, Kikuyu *kiama*, Tiv *jir*, Dogon *togu-na*, Senufo *poro*, Amazigh *tajmaat* and *azref*: classic regional ethnographies.

The prison and the court

Florence Bernault (ed.), *Enfermement, prison et châtiments en Afrique du 19e siècle à nos jours*, Karthala, 1999 (English edition: *A History of Prison and Confinement in Africa*, 2003): the colonial origin of the African penal institution and its labour functions. Lexical borrowings: *kaso* (Bambara, Dioula, Wolof) from the French *cachot*; *gereza* and *jela* in Swahili, from Portuguese and English. Prison overcrowding and pre-trial detention in Africa: data from the *World Prison Brief* (Institute for Crime & Justice Policy Research) and reports of national human rights commissions. Legal pluralism and the share of disputes settled outside the courts: work of the *Institut de recherche pour le développement*, of the *Danish Institute for Human Rights* and of the World Bank on community justice in West Africa.

The reforms cited

Burkina Faso: the law known as *Faso Bu-Kaooré* integrating customary bodies into the judicial system; official installation of the customary courts on May 22, 2026; flexible procedures in the national languages, mediation and conciliation; public debates on guarantees and avenues of recourse (Burkinabè press, May-June 2026). Côte d'Ivoire: Law No. 98-750 of 23 December 1998 on rural land tenure; village rural land management committees, public and adversarial inquiry, land certificate then title; Agence foncière rurale (AFOR); in urban areas, attestation by the village chief at the start of the procedure for a definitive concession order. Rwanda: *gacaca* courts (2002-2012), about two million cases tried; official evaluation reports and criticisms by human rights organisations. South Africa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission (1996-1998), final report; debates on reparations.

Our own writings (bwa-sacre.org)

KING BAZURU, *L'Arbre à Palabres* (The Palaver Tree), signed writing of the second document; *Le Bois Sacré* (The Sacred Wood), September 5, 2026, augmented edition of the 6th — the village without walls and the three ceremonies; *Le Quatrième Jihad* (The Fourth Jihad), September 7, 2026

(edition of the 8th) — Kurukan Fuga and the peace of Sundiata; BAZURU, *Kamite, qui es-tu ?* (Kamite, Who Are You?), September 13, 2026 — restorative justice and the refusal of central power; *Les Kamites face aux religions révélées* (The Kamites Before the Revealed Religions), September 13, 2026 — the Kamite as mediator and the protection of the accused.

Chapter XII — Kamite, Come Back to the Fold

These references allow the reader to check the historical and legal facts mentioned in this declaration. The elements of lineage and personal journey belong to the registers of the Bwa Sacré and to the author's civil-status documents.

The road: Koumbi Saleh, the Mandé, the Niger bend

Berthier (Sophie), *Recherches archéologiques sur la capitale de l'empire de Ghana. Étude d'un secteur d'habitat à Koumbi Saleh, Mauritanie*, Oxford, BAR International Series 680, 1997.

Levtzion (Nehemia) et Hopkins (J. F. P.), *Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History*, Cambridge University Press, 1981 (sources arabes sur Ghana et Mali).

Niane (Djibril Tamsir), *Soundjata ou l'épopée mandingue*, Présence Africaine, 1960 — sur le Mandé et la fondation de l'empire du Mali.

UNESCO, *La Charte du Manden, proclamée à Kouroukan Fouga*, inscrite en 2009 sur la Liste représentative du patrimoine culturel immatériel de l'humanité.

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Şaul (Mahir) et Royer (Patrick), « La guerre du Volta-Bani et les Bwa », *Autrepart*, n° 26, 2003.

Décret du 30 septembre 1887 instituant le régime de l'indigénat en Afrique occidentale française ; loi n° 46-645 du 11 avril 1946 (loi Houphouët-Boigny) abolissant le travail forcé.

The borders

Acte général de la Conférence de Berlin, signé le 26 février 1885 (conférence ouverte le 15 novembre 1884).

Organisation de l'unité africaine, résolution AHG/Res.16(I), Le Caire, 21 juillet 1964, sur l'intangibilité des frontières héritées de la colonisation.

CEDEAO, protocole A/P.1/5/79 du 29 mai 1979 relatif à la libre circulation des personnes, au droit de résidence et d'établissement.

Décret du 5 septembre 1932 portant suppression de la colonie de la Haute-Volta et rattachement de la majeure partie de son territoire à la Côte d'Ivoire (effectif au 1er janvier 1933) ; loi n° 47-1707 du 4 septembre 1947 rétablissant la colonie de la Haute-Volta dans ses limites de 1932.

Indépendances : Haute-Volta, 5 août 1960 ; Côte d'Ivoire, 7 août 1960.

Côte d'Ivoire, loi n° 98-750 du 23 décembre 1998 relative au domaine foncier rural, modifiée ; sur la question autochtone/allochtone dans la boucle du cacao.

Freedom of conscience

Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme, 10 décembre 1948, article 18 (liberté de changer de religion ou de conviction).

Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, Nairobi, 27 juin 1981, article 8 (liberté de conscience et libre pratique de la religion).

Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques, 16 décembre 1966, article 18.

The ancestors and DNA

Cann (R. L.), Stoneking (M.) et Wilson (A. C.), « Mitochondrial DNA and human evolution », *Nature*, vol. 325, 1987, p. 31-36 — transmission de l'ADN mitochondrial par la lignée maternelle.

Underhill (P. A.) et Kivisild (T.), « Use of Y chromosome and mitochondrial DNA population structure in tracing human migrations », *Annual Review of Genetics*, vol. 41, 2007, p. 539-564.

Tishkoff (S. A.) *et al.*, « The genetic structure and history of Africans and African Americans », *Science*, vol. 324, 2009, p. 1035-1044 — diversité génétique africaine et origines des populations afro-descendantes.

Cajamarca

Hemming (John), *The Conquest of the Incas*, Macmillan, 1970 — sur la capture d'Atahualpa à Cajamarca, le 16 novembre 1532, et la décision de ne pas engager le combat.

Writings of the Bwa Sacré cited

Le Bois Sacré ; *Le Quatrième Jihad* ; *Appel solennel à tous les Kamites* ; *La Position du Kamite* ; *Kamite, qui es-tu ?* ; *Les Kamites face aux religions révélées* ; *Juger sans prison*. Bwa Sacré, 2026.

Chapter XIV — Kamite, Your Neighbour Is Your Brother

The dated facts cited in this declaration are public. They are given here so that the reader may check them and, if need be, correct them. The judgements are the author's; the facts are not.

Neo-colonialism: the word and the thing

Nkrumah (Kwame), *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, London, Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1965.

Fanon (Frantz), *Les Damnés de la terre*, Paris, Maspero, 1961, chapter "Mésaventures de la conscience nationale".

Decree of September 30, 1887 instituting the *indigénat* regime in French West Africa; law no. 46-645 of April 11, 1946 abolishing forced labour in the overseas territories.

The currency

Decree no. 45-0136 of December 25, 1945 instituting the franc of the French colonies of Africa (put into circulation from December 26, 1945).

Devaluation of January 11, 1994: parity moved from 1 CFA franc = 0.02 FF to 1 CFA franc = 0.01 FF. Fixed parity to the euro since January 1, 1999: 1 € = 655.957 CFA francs.

Reform announced on December 21, 2019 for the West African Monetary Union: end of the centralisation of foreign exchange reserves with the French Treasury, withdrawal of French representatives from the governing bodies of the BCEAO, planned change of name; maintenance of the fixed parity and of the convertibility guarantee.

Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), annual reports; Bank of Central African States (BEAC), annual reports.

For the two theses in contention: Nubukpo (Kako) *et al.*, *Sortir l'Afrique de la servitude monétaire*, La Dispute, 2016; and, in the opposite direction, the work of the BCEAO and of the International Monetary Fund on price stability in the franc zone.

Contracts and value chains

Washington Convention of March 18, 1965 on the settlement of investment disputes (ICSID); public database of registered cases.

High Level Panel on Illicit Financial Flows from Africa (Mbeki report), African Union and Economic Commission for Africa, 2015.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, reports on commodities and local processing; International Cocoa Organization, grinding statistics by country.

Divide and rule

Mamdani (Mahmood), *Citizen and Subject. Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton University Press, 1996.

Şaul (Mahir) and Royer (Patrick), *West African Challenge to Empire*, Ohio University Press, 2001 (Volta-Bani war, 1915-1916).

General Act of the Berlin Conference, February 26, 1885; OAU, resolution AHG/Res.16(I), Cairo, July 21, 1964.

Regional facts cited

Liptako-Gourma Charter instituting the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), signed at Bamako on September 16, 2023; confederation treaty adopted at the Niamey summit on July 6, 2024.

Notification of withdrawal from ECOWAS on January 28, 2024, effective January 29, 2025; ECOWAS transitional measures on the recognition of passports and visa-free movement.

Confederal levy of 0.5% on imports from outside the area, instituted in March 2025; Confederal Bank for Investment and Development inaugurated at Bamako on December 23, 2025; inaugural session of the confederal parliament at Niamey on August 24, 2026.

ECOWAS, 69th ordinary session (Lungi, Sierra Leone, July 21, 2026): extension of the chief negotiator's mandate to December 2026; discussions bearing on security, logistics corridors and economic exchanges.

Land and the palaver

Côte d'Ivoire, law no. 98-750 of December 23, 1998 on rural land tenure, as amended; implementing decrees on village rural land management committees; Rural Land Agency (AFOR).

UNESCO, *Charte du Manden, proclamée à Kouroukan Fouga*, Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, 2009.

UNESCO, *Système gada, système sociopolitique démocratique autochtone des Oromo*, inscribed in 2016.

Writings of the Bwa Sacré cited

Le Bois Sacré; *Le Quatrième Jihad*; *Appel solennel à tous les Kamites*; *La Position du Kamite*; *Kamite, qui es-tu ?*; *Les Kamites face aux religions révélées*; *Juger sans prison*; *Kamite, reviens au bercail*. Bwa Sacré, 2026.

Chapter XV — The Seal

This act does not ask to be taken at its word. The standards are public, the protocols are open, and the computations may be redone without us. The texts cited on signature are particularly recommended to anyone who would contest the third section: they say themselves what we reproach them with.

The calendar

KING BAZURU, *The Kamite Pilgrimage*, Abidjan, Bwa Sacré, September 2, 2026, bwa-sacre.org — the first year fixed at Narmer, the rule of 4236 and 4237, the twelve months of thirty days and the five days outside time.

Richard A. Parker, *The Calendars of Ancient Egypt*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950 — the reference study on the calendar of the Nile valley.

Fingerprints and registers

NIST, *FIPS PUB 180-4, Secure Hash Standard*, Gaithersburg, National Institute of Standards and Technology, August 2015 – the specification of SHA-256 and SHA-384.

Ralph C. Merkle, *A Digital Signature Based on a Conventional Encryption Function*, CRYPTO '87, Springer, 1988 – the tree that lets a single anchoring seal thousands of acts.

The anchoring

Satoshi Nakamoto, *Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System*, 2008 – the chain whose difficulty of writing gives it its evidential value.

Peter Todd, *OpenTimestamps*, open timestamping protocol, opentimestamps.org – the tool by which a fingerprint is written into a block, and verifiable by anyone.

IETF, *RFC 3161, Internet X.509 Public Key Infrastructure Time-Stamp Protocol (TSP)*, August 2001 – standardized timestamping: it receives only a fingerprint, never the document.

Signature, and what it hands over

ETSI, *EN 319 142-1, PAdES digital signatures – Part 1: Building blocks and PAdES baseline signatures*, V1.2.1, January 2024, and *EN 319 142-2*, V1.2.1, July 2025 – the signature format within the PDF, and its long-term validation level. A container: nowhere does it require the document to travel.

ETSI, *EN 319 122 (CAdES)* and *EN 319 132 (XAdES)* – the same principles for the other containers; the same silence on transmitting the document.

CEN, *EN 419241-1:2018, Trustworthy Systems Supporting Server Signing – Part 1: General System Security Requirements*, and *EN 419241-2:2019, Protection profile for QSCD for Server Signing* – the standard that describes, concealing nothing, the system in which a third party holds the

signature creation device and signs on the signatory's behalf. To be read in order to know what one accepts when signing remotely.

Cloud Signature Consortium, *Architectures and protocols for remote signature applications*, API v2.2 — the protocol that transmits only the fingerprint to be signed: half the way, the document saved, the key still elsewhere.

European Parliament and Council, *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of 23 July 2014 on electronic identification and trust services (eIDAS)*, and *Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 of 11 April 2024* revising it — the reference framework; it admits both the signature held by the signatory and the signature held by a server, and imposes neither.

IETF, *RFC 5280, Internet X.509 Public Key Infrastructure Certificate and CRL Profile*, May 2008 — the format of certificates and of their revocation.

Archiving, and what it presupposes

AFNOR, *NF Z 42-013*, first published 1999, revised several times, and its international equivalent *ISO 14641-1*, 2018 — electronic archiving with evidential value. An excellent standard, built on a presupposition that is not ours: that the archived act was already produced in a settled legal context.

The West African standard

Pixel AI SARLU, *NAOA — Norme de l'Acte Officiel Africain*, white paper, Abidjan, June 18, 2026, PEN IANA 65877, Creative Commons BY-SA 4.0 — twelve principles addressed to the Chambers of Notaries of West Africa, to OHADA, to ECOWAS and to the WAEMU; original creation and orality are recognized there for the first time in a signature framework.

OHADA, *Uniform Act relating to General Commercial Law*, revised December 15, 2010 — articles 5 and 13: the evidential force of the electronic writing, and the ten-year retention of commercial documents.

WAEMU, *Directive 09/2015/CM/UEMOA of 25 September 2015*, and ECOWAS, *Supplementary Act A/SA.2/01/10* – the mutual recognition of electronic signatures within the regional space.

The key and its keeping

Adi Shamir, *How to Share a Secret*, Communications of the ACM, vol. 22, no. 11, November 1979 – cutting a secret into parts of which a single one says nothing: the palaver tree in mathematics.

The register of our ancestors

KING BAZURU, *The Invisible Ledger*, Abidjan, Bwa Sacré, June 12, 2026 – the register that held without being written, and why it held.

Chapter XVI – The Key of the Kamite

This conduct does not ask to be taken on trust. The standards cited are public, the protocols are open, and the computations can be redone without us. Whoever wishes to write his own tool will find here what he needs to do so without asking us anything: that is the very purpose of publication.

The rule from which this conduct proceeds

KING BAZURU, *The Seal*, act of the Bwa Sacré instituting the seal of the Kamites, the Kamite standard of signature, its register and its timestamping in the Kamite calendar, Abidjan, September 18, 2026, bwa-sacre.org – the twelve articles, the three levels, and the unplugging test.

KING BAZURU, *The Kamite Pilgrimage*, Abidjan, Bwa Sacré, September 2, 2026 – year one fixed at Narmer, the twelve months of thirty days, and the five days outside time in which the key is renewed.

KING BAZURU, *The Sacred Grove*, fourth Book of Lassa, Abidjan, Bwa Sacré, 2026 – *teerobè*, *tchènirobè* and *bwan bèssi robè*: the twig, the name of the spirit, and the calling of the soul.

The seed and the key

M. Palatinus, P. Rusnak, A. Voisine, S. Bowe,*BIP-39: Mnemonic code for generating deterministic keys*, 2013 – the twenty-four words, their list and their checksum.

IETF, *RFC 9106, Argon2 Memory-Hard Function for Password Hashing and Proof-of-Work Applications*, September 2021 – the slow function that makes guessing names expensive.

IETF, *RFC 5869, HMAC-based Extract-and-Expand Key Derivation Function (HKDF)*, May 2010 – the derivation of the year's key from the seed.

NIST, *FIPS PUB 186-5, Digital Signature Standard*, February 2023, and *FIPS PUB 180-4, Secure Hash Standard*, August 2015 – the P-256 curve and the SHA-256 digest.

Adi Shamir, *How to Share a Secret*, Communications of the ACM, vol. 22, no. 11, November 1979 – cutting a secret into parts of which one alone says nothing: the palaver tree in mathematics, and the sharing of the bwa code.

The certificate, the signature and the date

IETF, *RFC 5280, Internet X.509 Public Key Infrastructure Certificate and CRL Profile*, May 2008 – the format of certificates, of their usages and of their revocation.

ETSI, *EN 319 142-1, PAdES digital signatures*, V1.2.1, January 2024, and *EN 319 142-2*, V1.2.1, July 2025 – the signature format inside the PDF, and its long-term validation level.

IETF, *RFC 3161, Time-Stamp Protocol (TSP)*, August 2001 – the short chain: a timestamp that receives only a fingerprint, never the document.

Peter Todd, *OpenTimestamps*, open timestamping protocol, opentimestamps.org, and Satoshi Nakamoto, *Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System*, 2008 – the long chain: the fingerprint written into a block no one rewrites.

Ralph C. Merkle, *A Digital Signature Based on a Conventional Encryption Function*, CRYPTO '87, Springer, 1988 — the tree that lets a single anchoring seal thousands of acts.

What the other standards grant, and what they leave

CEN, *EN 419241-1:2018* and *EN 419241-2:2019, Trustworthy Systems Supporting Server Signing* — the system in which a third party holds the signature device and signs on the signatory's behalf: level zero, described by those who practise it.

Cloud Signature Consortium, *Architectures and protocols for remote signature applications*, API v2.2 — the protocol that transmits only the fingerprint to be signed: level one, the document safe, the key still elsewhere.

European Parliament and Council, *Regulation (EU) No 910/2014 of 23 July 2014 (eIDAS)*, revised by *Regulation (EU) 2024/1183 of 11 April 2024* — the reference framework: it admits both, and imposes neither.

Pixel AI SARLU, *NAOA — Standard of the African Official Act*, white paper, Abidjan, June 18, 2026, IANA PEN 65877 — the standard addressed to the institutions of West Africa; original creation and orality are there recognised for the first time in a signature framework.

THE KAMITE STANDS

The gesture, the word and the proof –
the Books of Lassa, the Declarations and the Seal
Fifteen writings

Text by KING BAZURU
Venerable and President of the Kamites

First publications: Abidjan, September 4 to 19, 2026
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SCEAU-0 register – Kamite standard of signature

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Signe électroniquement par
KING BAZURU
09S-BAZURU01-9
2026-09-20 01:45:22 UTC
Pixel Sceau
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