

Translation of Oral History Interview with Faty Ba

QUESTION: [00:00:03] We're going to start by asking you for your first and last name, the name of your village and your profession, if you are a housewife or a farmer? Then, can you tell us your maternal and paternal genealogy, and then tell us where your family is originally from? Before answering these questions, can you tell us if you agree to being filmed and recorded? [00:00:52]

BA: [00:00:53] Oh my son, I agree to be filmed. And that makes me happy. [00:00:55]

QUESTION: [00:00:56] After that, can you tell us your genealogy on the maternal side and the paternal side, what are their different origins and did you know your grandparents? I am asking you a question regarding slavery, did you experience it or did family members experience it and how? Everything you know about this slavery in the village, describe how those you know experienced it with all the details you can tell us, etc. ? [00:01:57]

BA: [00:01:58] My father's name is Labbo Sambou. [00:02:01]

QUESTION: [00:02:01] Labbou Sambou and his first name? [00:02:02]

BA: [00:02:03] Labbo Samba Ba. And my name is: Faty Labbo Samba Ba. That's my name. [00:02:15]

NAMMDAL: [00:02:16] What is your mother's name? [00:02:17]

BA: [00:02:18] My mother's name is: Ngannou Woubou Sy or Ngannou Bokara Koumba Élimane Diama. [00:02:22]

QUESTION: [00:02:23] Is she from the village? [00:02:25]

BA: [00:02:26] My mom and dad are from Nganno. Our family home is located next to where you parked your car. It's the next door. [00:02:31]

QUESTION: [00:02:32] How long have your families been living in the village? [00:02:33]

BA: [00:02:34] We've always been there. [00:02:34]

QUESTION: [00:02:35] Are they the founders of the village? [00:02:36]

BA: [00:02:37] Their real origin? [00:02:38]

QUESTION: [00:02:38] Yes, where do they come from? [00:02:49]

BA: [00:02:40] On the paternal side, they say they are from Gabou, that is where they say they are from. They arrived at the village to accompany the Wane families. The Wane family lives in another part of the village. When they arrived, our families moved to this side and the Wane families moved to the other side. And our grandparents occupied this place. They are from the

Torobbés (marabouts) social group. Our families were dependent on the Wane families. These latter had fields in which our grandparents worked. They worked in the fields and they settled there, but the fields do not belong to them. [00:03:17]

QUESTION: [00:03:18] So, when they arrived, the Wane families considered your grandparents to be their slaves? [00:03:23]

BA: [00:03:24] No, they didn't consider them as their slaves when they arrived. [00:03:25]

QUESTION: [00:03:26] Were your grandparents Torobbe too? [00:03:27]

BA: [00:03:28] We define ourselves as Diéyabés or simple slaves. [00:03:30]

QUESTION: [00:03:31] So, slaves? [00:03:32]

BA: [00:03:33] Yes, slaves, but the others are Torobbés. [00:03:34]

QUESTION: [00:03:35] How did they become slaves? [00:03:36]

BA: [00:03:37] No, I don't know. [00:03:38]

QUESTION: [00:03:39] Have they been slaves for a long time or did they become slaves recently? [00:03:40]

BA: [00:03:41] They don't have masters, but they are slaves. [00:03:44]

QUESTION: ???

BA: [00:03:48] They never told me that. I do not know. [00:03:52]

QUESTION: [00:03:53] On your maternal side, too, you have never been told that? [00:03:55]

BA: [00:03:56] No, I wasn't told. [00:03:56]

QUESTION: [00:03:57] Were they slaves at the start or only when they arrived in the village? [00:04:00]

BA: [00:04:01] On the maternal side, their grandfather is from a place called: Diombougou, on the eastern side (Mali). He arrived here on his own, in a place in the village called Toulel Diama, which was next to a Ganki (tree: *Celtis integrifolia*). When he arrived at this place, he took a piece of wood, which he pricked on the ground, because his relative had said it: that once arrived at this place, to stay there and someone will find it there and recognize it. A person who is one of Sall's families, found him standing there with some Koran books he was carrying, greeted him and said to him: but you are the son of such? He replied: yes. They prayed together to Alassar (the 5 p.m. prayer) and together they prayed the Foutouro (the 7 p.m. prayer) and that of Guédié (the 9 p.m. prayer), always together. After this last prayer, the gentleman asked him to take his

luggage and his books and brought him home. Since then, he did not leave this house until his wedding day, God forgive me. This is our maternal grandfather. He went to get married in the village of Sinthiou Garba with a girl named Youba and they had children. [00:05:08]

QUESTION: [00:05:09] Was this maternal grandfather considered in this family as a slave? [00:05:12]

BA: [00:05:13] Yes, of course, since he came on his own, he is considered a slave. [00:05:15]

QUESTION: [00:05:16] Is the Ganki (tree) in question still there? [00:05:18]

BA: [00:05:19] The tree was cut down and a mosque was built instead. [00:05:21]

QUESTION: [00:05:22] Is the mosque still there? [00:05:23]

BA: [00:05:24] Yes, the mosque still exists, for the moment. [00:05:25]

QUESTION: [00:05:25] So, is it a mosque that we build in place of the tree? [00:05:26]

BA: [00:05:26] This mosque is built on the spot and at one time it was our maternal grandfather who led the prayers, for seven years it was he, the Imam of the village, here in the village of Nganno. [00:05:38]

QUESTION: [00:05:39] What was his name? [00:05:39]

BA: [00:05:40] His name is Bokara Koumba Élimane Diama. Yes, for seven years, he led the prayers and he showed the village how to pray to Allah. On the other hand, it is taboo in the village, because, when we remind the villagers of its history, they get angry. The nobles of the village do not like to be reminded of this story. My mother told me that for seven years her father was the village Imam. [00:06:00]

QUESTION: [00:06:01] Your grandfather led the prayers at the village mosque for seven. Why do the villagers get angry when you remind them of this? [00:06:10]

BA: [00:06:11] A slave should not lead prayers. This is what it is, because our grandfather had religious knowledge and they put him as Imam, despite themselves. And, after his death, they want to ignore this story, which they find humiliating towards them. [00:06:22]

QUESTION: [00:06:23] What was your grandfather's personal history before he came to the village? Was he a noble in another place or was he sold, despite his education, how did it go? [00:06:33]

BA: [00:06:33] It's possible. [00:06:33]

QUESTION: [00:06:34] Or maybe he was captured as a child? [00:06:35]

BA: [00:06:35] When he came he was already an adult, he was not young and he had a lot of offspring there. [00:06:41]

QUESTION: [00:06:42] What can you say about the genealogies of your grandparents? [00:06:47]

BA:[00:06:48] Both on the mother's side and on the father's side, there are a lot of us in the village. [00:06:57]

QUESTION: [00:06:58] Are there many of you in the village? [00:06:59]

BA: [00:07:00] This is the neighborhood on my mother's side, we call it the western neighborhood. If you go to the other side, you have a neighborhood that my parents have called: Quartier des Bababés (Ba's family). [00:07:15]

QUESTION: [00:07:16] Where does the name of the Bababés district come from? [00:07:17]

BA: [00:07:18] Yes, we called him that, because all the inhabitants of the neighborhood have family: Ba. Initially it was one house, when they became more numerous some people built their houses a little further away and they went their separate ways, but in the beginning, it was one house. [00:07:33]

QUESTION: [00:07:34] You lived with one of your grandparents? [00:07:43]

BA: [00:07:44] No, I couldn't find any of my grandparents alive. [00:07:48]

QUESTION: [00:07:49] Not even the one who was the village Imam? [00:07:50]

BA: [00:07:51] No, I haven't seen him. However, I do know my paternal aunts and grew up with one of them. [00:07:59]

QUESTION: [00:08:00] What's her name? [00:08:01]

BA: [00:08:01] Her name is Assa Sambou, she is my father's sister. [00:08:03]

QUESTION: [00:08:04] Did she have children? [00:08:05]

BA: [00:08:06] No, she didn't have any children.[00:08:07]

QUESTION: [00:08:10] Can you tell us a bit about your childhood? What type of education did you receive? From a young age, were you called a slave? Or, do you know people, who are called by this qualifier "slave" in the village? [00:08:38]

BA: [00:08:39] We were born into slavery. We have not known a social qualification other than the term slave. We ourselves say that we are slaves. Moreover, after the death of my paternal aunt, my father wanted to get me back. But the late aunt's co-wife asked my father to let me

continue to live with their family, as they had no children except a boy. My father agreed to leave me there. At dawn, we wake up to go to the fields. The fields were behind the river and I stayed there from morning till night. Look at the scarring that's there on my face, they gave it to me, the years I spent morning till night in the fields under the sun. At sunset, I had to cross the river with my bundle of wood on my head. When I get home, I prepare couscous for dinner. There was a lot of couscous to prepare and I had some girlfriends who offered to help me, so that I would finish quickly, so that I could go play with them. They would help me cook dinner and then I would go out with them to go play. I could go a month without eating, when the family I lived in had the means. Since I was young at the time, I was given the task of climbing the termite mound to watch the monkeys, so that they did not destroy our harvest. We would bring down the termite mound to come and serve them to eat, without feeding me. My parents were not aware of this situation. When I ran away and I returned to my parents, my father took care of bringing me back there. We stayed that way, while my eyes were hurting from the sun. When I fell ill, someone went to say to my father: "You, don't you love your daughter, whom you entrusted to such and such a family." He told my dad, "They are mistreating your daughter." That's why my father came to get me. My father said to the lady: "Take good care of my daughter, was it I, who gave her to you?" She replied: "Take your daughter with you." My dad said, "I just wish you treated her like your own child." She said: "No, take your daughter with you." That's why my dad said, "Get up, we're going." The year I returned to live with my parents was also the year of my marriage. When I was entrusted to my aunt I was only two years old and if you see that after all these years, I ended up leaving there, it is because they did not treat me well otherwise, we were going to part on good terms. I have suffered a lot in this family. [00:11:20]

QUESTION: [00:11:21] ??? [00:11:38]

BA: [00:11:39] I kept the field constantly. I did not braid and I never cleaned my clothes. I didn't have nice clothes or nice shoes. This suffering did not stop until the year I was married to my husband who is in front of you. [00:11:51]

QUESTION: [00:11:52] And in relation to your eyes? [00:11:52]

BA: [00:11:53] I have one eye that still hurts, until now. Before, my mother took me everywhere for treatment, but to no avail. It was a lady who advised my mother to do this scarring and take the blood that runs there and put it in my eyes. When my mother had this operation, it was a great relief. But, so far, I have one eye that hurts and I still have treatment. [00:12:19]

QUESTION: [00:12:19] ??? [00:12:20]

BA: [00:12:21] There is a kind of cyst in my eye and I can't see well with that eye. [00:12:23]

QUESTION: [00:12:24] ??? [00:12:25]

BA: [00:12:26] I only have one eye. And, so far, I go to Wourosogui (town) for treatment. It was because of the sun. It was, when I was sitting in the hot sun, watching the monkeys. I was just watching the monkeys so they didn't destroy the field. [00:12:49]

QUESTION: [00:12:50] ??? [00:12:53]

BA: [00:12:54] No, I was watching monkeys. [00:12:58]

QUESTION: [00:13:00] What was your father's job? [00:13:02]

BA: [00:13:03] He farmed his field and at the same time he was fishing. When they came to the village, they were young and they owned cattle. And, more precisely cows that my uncle had kept until his death. There are still cows in his family. His luck, however, was not in breeding, but he made a living from farming and fishing. Rather, it was my uncle who was successful in breeding. [00:13:33]

QUESTION: [00:13:34] Did your father have another job? [00:13:36]

BA: [00:13:37] No, I don't think so. He didn't sing and he wasn't healing. [00:13:45]

QUESTION: [00:13:56] Do you have any siblings? [00:14:00]

BA: [00:14:01] I have a brother and a sister and I have a half-brother. [00:14:02]

QUESTION: [00:14:03] You didn't live together? [00:14:04]

BA: [00:14:05] No, because I left my parents when I was two years old. [00:14:14]

QUESTION: [00:14:15] ??? [00:14:18]

BA: [00:14:18] And, a year after leaving this family, I got married. [00:14:26]

QUESTION: [00:14:39] You haven't answered the question about your job yet? [00:14:45]

BA: [00:14:46] I have always loved to trade. I was already selling candy when I was very young. I was swapping corn or sorghum candy. At harvest time, I would exchange candy on the cob of corn or sorghum. Afterwards, I gave it back to my mother. Because, we only had one boy in the family. When I got married, my husband goes fishing and I go to the market to sell them. When he farms, I take care of the supervision of the harvest. When he milks the milk, I go to sell it at the market. When we came to live here, I started selling vegetables. I go to Horkodiéré, Nabadji or Kanel to buy vegetables, in order to resell them. I even have a small vegetable garden that I farm. In a little while, I will go and take care of my vegetable garden. [00:15:53]

QUESTION: [00:16:00] ??? [00:16:46]

BA: [00:16:47] No, on this side, I don't know. Because, we are not slaves of people. [00:16:56]

QUESTION: [00:16:57] ??? [00:17:05]

BA: [00:17:06] We are indeed slaves, because our parents were slaves, but we are not dependent on any noble family. The family I lived in, the husband was blind, it was his wife who mistreated me. And, when he passed away, my suffering increased with his wife. The husband was my father's brother and he is the oldest in the family. It was his wife who had, as the caregiver is died, she wanted me to stay with her, but this adoption went badly. [00:17:51]

QUESTION: [00:17:54] ??? [00:18:08]

BA: [00:18:09] No, I lived with my uncle's family. [00:18:10]

QUESTION: [00:18:14] ??? [00:18:33]

BA: [00:18:34] When the Torobbés families have a ceremony, they call us and we take care of the cooking from morning to night, but they have to call us first. We warn you in advance, otherwise, you're not going. When we are scheduled, all the women belonging to the social group of slaves, come together to take care of the dinner for the guests. After that, we are paid for the work we have done. And, we share that among us. We too, when we have a wedding ceremony, we call them, they come to work for us. It is this exchange that we have with the so-called noble families. We call each other for mutual work during baptisms, wedding ceremonies, but not for the mourning ceremony, for mourning, we do not call each other. It is good manners and mutual aid that we have established between us, in order to live in a peaceful way. Back in the days of mud construction, we used to do the same thing. [00:19:27]

QUESTION: [00:19:28] ??? [00:19:39]

BA: [00:19:40] No, no. Regarding the wedding ceremonies, all the villagers consult each other beforehand for the organization, but this is not a dependency on each other. [00:19:50]

QUESTION: [00:19:51] ??? [00:19:59]

BA: [00:20:00] For me, the slave is one who depends on his master or who lives at the expense of his masters. But, now, slaves or not slaves, we are all going to do the work during the ceremonies. The example of us who have no masters, when we lose our husband, we stay in our rooms for 4 months and 10 days. As for female slaves, if they lose their husbands, they stay in their rooms for 2 months and 5 days. As for the nobles, losing their husbands, they stay 4 months and 10 days in their rooms, just like us. So, if that person calls you a slave, if you don't like it, it won't go through. It's just good manners and teasing between us and calling us a slave or a nobleman, but I don't like that, you can't treat me like that. We do this teasing exchange so that we can live that way and continue to help each other. Time and time again we have been to their ceremonies and people ask us for money and tell us that we are noble. I have heard it several times: you are not slaves, you are Fulani. [00:21:13]

QUESTION: [00:21:14] ??? [00:21:19]

BA: [00:21:20] Yes. [00:21:21]

QUESTION: [00:21:27] ??? [00:21:41]

BA: [00:21:42] For that one. [00:21:43]

QUESTION: [00:21:44] ??? [00:21:55]

BA: [00:21:56] The nobleman is simply part of a social group. These are the members from this group. Outside of the group, they are nobler than anyone. We are called a slave because it is a social group. We qualify others as Torobbés so that we can exchange and live together, but no group is superior to the other. [00:22:24]

QUESTION: [00:22:25] ??? [00:22:31]

BA: [00:22:32] I didn't understand that. [00:22:33]

QUESTION: [00:23:33] ??? [00:22:45]

BA: [00:22:46] Some time ago, they said that from now on, man and woman are equal. [00:23:50]

QUESTION: [00:22:51] Who said that? [00:22:52]

BA: [00:22:53] I heard him in the village. The woman will never be equal to the man. Besides, we can say that one can meet a woman who can do a task reserved for men or a man who does tasks reserved for women. But, equality between men and women is not possible. [00:23:12]

QUESTION: [00:23:15] ??? [00:23:23]

BA: [00:23:25] What do you think of human rights? [00:23:26]

QUESTION: [00:23:26] ??? [00:23:29]

BA: [00:23:30] Who? [00:23:30]

QUESTION: [00:23:31] ??? [00:23:54]

BA: [00:23:55] I don't understand this question. [00:23:56]

QUESTION: [00:23:56] ??? [00:24:30]

BA: [00:24:31] Every human person has an origin and has a destination. If you see him, take him as a human person should be. Either take him as yourself or as you take your son. This is what I believe is the right of every human being. Give him something to eat, give him a place to sleep, give him something to drink. But someone who ignores another person like him, I think that's wrong. Yes, that is not good. [00:25:02] END.