

24 HEURES A DAKAR english translation

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LIFE HISTORY

SHORT STORY OF SENEGAL

Senegal has a very rich history and even if we haven't got any written trace, thanks to the various accounts and the legends, we can see to which extend the country still keeps nowadays the traces of everything that contributed to its creation : great men, wars and conquests...

The Djolof kingdom, the current heart of Senegal was founded by a Ndiaye. This king would have gathered the Wolof tribes at the beginning of the 14th century and his kingdom lasted until 1549 when, according to the present Portuguese missionaries, a rebel Prince, Amari Fall assumed power. During the following decades, there was a certain instability from which the Portuguese colonial power widely benefited. In 1456, they had landed in Cap-Vert, under the baton of Venetian Commander Molto. But the first real trading post was opened by the Dutch in 1617 with the construction of two forts on the island of Gorée. More in the North, the French and the British coveted Saint-Louis because of its strategic situation at the mouth of the Senegal River that opens the exploration of the land. In 1677 the French definitely took control of Senegal with the seizure of Gorée, that the British would regularly try to seize until 1815.

Meanwhile, the black kingdoms of the river were split by the Moorish and Toucouleurs invasions. But they were fought off and the area was definitely conquered and pacified with the defeat of Toucouleurs chief Hadji Omar in 1859, even if the ardour of the French colonizer was slowed down by extremely violent resistances within the country.

In 1900, all the realms went to France except the Casamance for which the high number of chiefs made each political agreement difficult. Dakar, which was created in 1857, became the office of the A.O.F government. At that time, the missionaries began to evangelize, with a very limited success, the Sévère country and Casamance.

During World War One, Senegalese infantry appeared. However, this army corps dated from 1857 and was created by Faidherbe in order to conquer the North of Senegal. The first battalion of Senegalese infantry – at first based in Saint-Louis - that was linked with the marine corps multiplied and was in the Sudan and Niger a few years later. Between 1914 and 1918, 180 000 Senegalese infantry members were recruited to go fighting in France and 30 000 of them died there ! Until 1962, they successively intervened in Morocco, Syria, France, Tunisia, Chad and in Indochina. Surprisingly, in spite of the suffering that they beared during the war, the survivors would be ready to go back.

DID YOU KNOW IT ?

In 1916 the French government decided to give the French citizenship to the inhabitants of four towns, Saint-Louis, Rufisque, Gorée and Dakar. And today, whereas Senegal has gained its independence since 1960, many inhabitants of Dakar try to obtain a French passport, in support of documents of the time, giving the French citizenship of their parents as a pretext...

FEW DATES ABOUT DAKAR

The history of Dakar is tightly linked with the history of Gorée and Cap-Vert. We can consider Dakar as the « daughter » of Gorée.

1750 : French naturalist Michel Adanson makes the first sketch of Cap vert on which the name of Dakar is mentioned .

May 25th 1857 : official date of the creation of Dakar by Pinet Laprade. The French pavilion is pulled up.

May 6th 1859 : layover of Louis Faidherbe, governor of Senegal, peacemaker of the colony and creator of the railway between Dakar and Saint-Louis.

June 1862 : Pinet Laprade develops a new alignment plan of the city. Then, Dakar is a « real labyrinth composed of streets and dead ends , turns and detours ».

1869 : cholera epidemic that decimates the native population of Dakar. A lazaret is opened. Death of Pinet Laprade.

1872 : creation of the town of Gorée.

1875 : Dakar becomes the rounding center instead of Gorée.

1878 : around 1600 inhabitants live in Dakar.

December 9th 1887 : Jean Alexandre becomes the first mayor of Dakar.

1902 : Dakar becomes the Seat of the Executive for A.O.F (the French West Africa)

1904 : 18500 inhabitants in Dakar

1907 : Building of the Palace of the Governor General of A.O.F, it is now the presidential palace.

April 1908 : colonies Minister Millies Lacroix lays the foundation stone of the Kermel Market.

1909 : 25000 inhabitants in Dakar. The town is already the first port in Senegal.

1920 : Blaise Diagne elected as mayor of Dakar and will keep office until 1934. A secondary course is created and will become the Van Vollenhoven Secondary School - nowadays Lamine Guèye Secondary School- because of the name of a short-lived governor who opposed the recruitment of natives for World War One.

1912 : creation of the railway station.

1918 : the City Hall is built.

1825 : first airmail service between Toulouse and Dakar.

1926 : 33679 inhabitants in Dakar, 2939 of whom are European, whereas there are only 700 inhabitants left in Gorée, which was united with Dakar in 1929.

1938 : the French Institute of Black Africa is founded under the supervision of Théodore Monod.

1947 : French President Vincent Auriol is the first French Head of State to visit Black Africa.

1958 : Dakar becomes the capital city of Senegal instead of Saint-Louis.

1964 : building of the Great Mosque.

1996 : Dakar is divided in 19 « district communes ».

DID YOU KNOW IT ?

While the name of Dakar first appeared in 1750, there is a big mystery about its origin. Dakar could come from :

- ⚡# Dakhar - tamarind tree in Wolof-
- ⚡# Deuk raw – refuge in Wolof-
- ⚡# Ndakarou, which French form would be Dakar.
- ⚡# Accar or d'Accard – coming from the name of an obscure French merchant or seaman who would have given his name to a camp of the square-

LIFE DAKAR IN PRACTICE

SENEGAL IN A FEW WORDS

Area : 196 000 sq.km
9 million inhabitants (in 1997, 45 % of the population lived in urban areas).

Length of the coasts : 531 km.

Main cities :

- ⌘ Capital city : Dakar : 1.8 million inhabitants
- ⌘ Thiès : 216 000 inhabitants.
- ⌘ Kaolack : 193 000 inhabitants.
- ⌘ Zinguichor : 161 000 inhabitants.
- ⌘ Saint –Louis : 132 000 inhabitants.

Presidential system :

- ⌘ Head of State : Abdoulaye Wade since April 2000
- ⌘ Prime Minister : Moustafa Niasse since April 2000

Economic indicators :

- ⌘ GNP (Gross National Product) : 4.8 billion \$ (in 1998)
- ⌘ GNP per inhabitant : 530 \$ (in 1998)
- ⌘ Growth : 3.1%
- ⌘ Education budget : 3.7% of GNP
- ⌘ Defense budget : 71 million \$ (in 1999)
- ⌘ Index of Human Development : place 155 on a global scale out of 174 countries.

Main resources : fishing, tourism, peanut, phosphate.

Life expectancy : 52.7 years old

Fertility rate : 6.03 children per woman (in 1995)

Infant mortality : 70 out of 1000 births

Adult literacy rate :34.6%

Annual rate of population growth : 2.8%

Tourism :

- ⌘ 100 billion CFA Francs profit in 1999.
- ⌘ 500 000 tourists in 1998/1999.
- ⌘ Daily tourism expenditure : 70 000 CFA Francs.

Tropical climate :

- ⌘ dry season from November to June
- ⌘ rainy season between July and mid-October.

Time difference :

Senegal is at the same line as Greenwich meridian. Local time is the one of Greenwich Mean Time

Exchange :

- €# currency : CFA Franc
- €# 1 French Franc = 100 CFA Francs

Language :

- €# French is the official language used for business and education
- €# Wolof, traditional language, is spoken by 80% of the population.

Main religion : Islam.

National Holiday : April 4th

The flag :

The colours of the flag of the Republic of Senegal were chosen in 1960 . They are the actual Panafrican colours set like the three-coloured French pattern. The five pointed star of liberty and progress is printed in the centre of the flag.

National Anthem :

- Words by Léopold Sédar Senghor
- Music by Herbert Peppert

« Pluck your koras, all of you,
Beat your balafons,
The red lion has roared,
The tamer of the bush has leapt
Suddenly upward and dispelled darkness,
Sunshine on our terrors,
Sunshine on our hopes,
Let us all rise Brothers !
And hail the United Africa »

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN SENEGAL

New Year's Day : January 1st

Easter Monday : variable

White Monday : variable

Korité (Aïd el Fitr – end of Ramadan) : depends on the lunar calendar

All Saint's Day : November 1st

Maouloud (birth of prophet Mohamed) : depends on the lunar calendar

Independence National Holiday : April 4th

Ascension Day : variable

Tabaski (Aïd el Kebir – Sheep Day) : depends on the lunar calendar

Assumption : August 15th

Christmas Day : December 25th

Tamxarit (Muslim New Year's Day) : depends on the lunar calendar.

In Dakar, 24.7% of the households have the privilege of having a decent drainage, 36% benefit from a television, 28.6% have a fridge and 14% a car.

HOW DOES IT COST ?

- €# One litre petrol : 450 CFA Francs.

- €# Local beer : 700 CFA Francs.
- €# A packet american cigarettes : 500 CFA Francs
- €# A three-piece suit : 40 000 CFA Francs.
- €# An average fare : 1000 CFA Francs.
- €# A five – minute long telephone call to France : 4000 CFA Francs

LIFE TRANSPORTS

UNUSUAL PUBLIC TRANSPORTS...

From cumulo-nimbus going out of the repaired Peugeot's mufflers of the 70s, to the sheeps that are ingratiatingly waiting on the streets, through special driving habits, the traffic in Dakar is in a fine old mess.

Each day, the number of vehicles raises and in spite of the road works, jams are becoming more and more important and worse. At rush hours you frequently need half an hour to cover one kilometer. And whereas the beneficial wind permits to avoid breathing problems that affect capital cities, the same wind is very bad for motorists because most of the streets out of the city-centre have been reduced by half...or have even been completely covered with sand.

Because of rural depopulation, public transports in Senegal are very useful; 4 vehicles out of 5 are used for public transports. Each city and each village has its own bus station - opened 24 hours a day. According to the estimations, between 700 000 and 1 000 000 people use public transports, in the whole area of Dakar. That is the reason why bus stations are swarming with people all day long, such cosmopolitan microcosm where Senegalese and foreigners arrive, leave, transit, sleep, trade, walk, talk endlessly and above all ...wait !

The journeys can not only be very long – a journey between Dakar and Kedougou (702 kilometers) can take up to 24 hours – but the travelers also often have to push the fast busses, that often break down, or have to wait until the bus is full in order that it leaves. In fact, the fast buses's motto is : « always full » ; it means that, when a traveler has arrived at his destination, the bus does not leave until a new traveler has taken the vacant place. That is very pleasant when a passenger gets off at 2 in the morning in a village of 65 inhabitants... because it is hardly possible that at that time, another traveler of this village decides to leave in the same direction as the bus goes ! But, according to the inhabitants, they always find a solution at the cost of few shouts and discussions...

There are other means of transport : the famous black and yellow taxis. These taxis are especially used to drive people into the centre of the Senegalese cities. Their cousins, the « bush taxis » are used to travel inside the country, from one village to the other. 12 people can sit in but at the cost of unpleasant contortions.

People still go on traveling on animals in the countryside but also in the suburbs of Dakar. In the areas in which they lack water, the inhabitants are pleased to use horses or donkeys to transport the precious water.

The last means of transport is the most ecologic of Senegal : the pirogue. Whereas they are mostly used by seamen, some entire villages sometimes use them because the pirogues are their only link with their lands and with the rest of the country.

WOMEN IN DAKAR. SENEGALESE WOMEN ARE BECOMING LEADERS.

Whereas women's situation in Africa is often difficult, Senegalese women seem to have the most enviable position. They represent 52% of the working population and are considered as the pillars of the families.

Even if 75% of the women are still illiterate, Senegalese women are more independent and self-sufficient than many of her counterparts of the developed countries. They work in all the economic fields: the financial field, because of the massive system of tontine, the agricultural field with a hard work in the fields, and the commercial field because they have the monopoly of the fruit and vegetable trade...

Some of them, after a lot of work and persuasion have managed to reach the most important positions of the country (such as Member of Parliament, Minister or Chief Executive Officer). As seductresses and extrovert women, they are appreciated for these qualities by all the Africans and are aiming at representing all the African women in their fight for a better life in the continent.

They have even funded an association: the Afepes (the women association for enterprise promotion in Senegal). It is composed of 4000 business women from 35 to 50; they trade or lead micro-businesses in different fields. Their idea is to collect funds for the women who want to open a shop, to organize business-management training or to find subventions.

In their fight in favour of abortion, against exclusion or polygamy, women are more and more present during the news of the national television (RTS). The evening news, which is presented every two days by a woman, shows how deeply they have managed to impose as real citizens in the last few years.

And yet, it is neither easy nor insignificant to decide to be a journalist when you are a woman and you live in Africa. However, more and more Senegalese young women have decided to learn this job. At the ISSIC of Dakar, the high institute of information and communication, this year and for the first time, the number of registered women is higher than the number of men. It is perhaps because of the times but also because of a very strong will: "writing is my destiny, I can't stop writing" said one of them, a correspondent for Diva magazine. And once they will have succeeded in the examinations and will get their press card, they will have to go on fighting. In fact, managers are often tempted to give women "strictly feminine subjects" such as the opening of a new maternity hospital, fashion subjects or cosmetics.

But the situation is gradually changing: "It is not true anymore to say that women journalists are kept away" thinks Diva's correspondent, "they are not rejected anymore because they have more and more media-linked jobs. The society can be proud because it shows the evolution of mentalities.

And even if it is still difficult to have both a family life and a professional one, like all working women, those young women would leave their place for nothing else".

FEW FIGURES.

Women represent 52% of the working population and 60% of the voting population in Senegal. They represent 12% of the decision-taking representative authority of the country. 4 out of 120 Members of Parliament are women. There are also 6 women mayor in Senegal.

LIFESTYLE.

DJEMBE IN DAKAR.

DJEMBE : NATURAL SENSE OF RHYTHMS.

The djembe is a chalice-shaped instrument covered with a goatskin (formerly with antilopskin) and tightened with a plaited rope (formerly with leather straps). It belongs to « tumbler » drums. One mostly plays the djembe standing and barehanded. It can be carried thanks to a strap and one can fix on it metallic bells called « sessés » or « oreilles » (= hears).

As many of the instruments made with tight skin, the djembe has a festive function inseparable from its social role for the events of traditional societies such as weddings, births, funerals, circumcisions or harvestings...

The djembe, which has been the messenger of the « Mandingue Empire » and associated with dance and collective games, has contributed to consolidate the cultural cohesion of the societies and to perpetuate memory thanks to its expressiveness and its imposing sound effects. As its music is more linked with the celebration of social acts than with pure entertainment, it was more animist than muslim that's why the instrument has not left his mark in history.

Later on, because of the presence of the West and of its models, a cultural awareness occurred : after the independence of the African countries, the reappearance of theatrical arts and shows has been considered as the assertion of a national identity. This very artistic emancipation has lead the different musical and choreographic practices to go away from the strict cultural context in the framework of ballets or national groups. It also put the emphasis on leading interpreters such as Lansana Diabaté and Tafa Cissé, two Senegalese « drum-leaders » for whom traditional music can be and has to be synonymous of the opening and the evolution of customs.

Mandingue Empire: a caste-organized society made of many ethnic groups. The main groups are the « Bambara » (in the center of Mali), the « Malinké » (in the East of Guinea) and the « Dioula » (in the Ivory Coast).

REFLECTIONS OF A FIGHTER : ADAMA DRAME.

Master djembefola (who took part in the show Royal de Luxe).

« The djembe is above all an instrument of power. When you want to play it in a precise melody, you have to know how to do it (...) but you can play loud or soft, and use intermediate sounds.

« The djembe cannot be controlled in a studio. Sometimes, we start to make rowdy movements louder than the person who plays : open-air recording is easier to control. »

« The djembe needs a physical strength that women cannot endure, because the celebration of a circumcision lasts all the night long and it's very hard ! Hundreds of people are waiting to dance. For such a music, women are made for dancing, it's much more elegant. »

A MUSIC THAT ACCOMPANIES PEOPLE

In front of a musical Europe mostly based on the principles of harmony and written composition, the Africa of the rhythms appears more than ever as the continent of vital and

spontaneous throb. Percussion music, based on oral transmission, the one of the « griots » (strolling players and poets), accompanies the old history of the people and of their rituals but it has also become an ambassador of African culture. Experiences between Mandingue « drum-leaders » and French institutional structures such as Strasbourg percussions can testify it.

In a larger conception of polyrhythmics and of tones, djembe players do not confine themselves to a set instrumental form. They use some variants or copies such as the « dundun » (a drum which one can play with sticks), the « zinzin » that unites two dunduns or the « kenkeni ». The dundun can be defined as a second movement of solo djembe whereas the zinzin makes a stable rhythmic basis. The kenkeni is a counterpoint to the dundun.

In spite of a recent image of tourist tool (it is considered as a travel souvenir), the djembe has been much more than a simple tom-tom for a long time. It is now part of some learning programs of African music academies. It is considered as a real instrument which, because of all its modulations (on the rhythmic and on the melodic field), is self-supporting thanks to the playing of a soloist or it can also be part of a joint discourse that gathers tens of musicians. It has become the living expression of its own history.

**LIFESTYLE
GOOD AND NICE
A COOKING FULL OF FLAVOR**

In Senegal, gastronomy is women business. Bineta Diallo Dioh has always wanted to have a modern restaurant and to propose a good cooking made of local cereals. In the heart of Dakar, the meals of the pioneer, who won several awards, attract more and more customers.

In the restaurant called « Point d'Interrogation », in the heart of Dakar, not far from the French cultural center, Lamine and Cheikh's plates are already empty. As a sign of good meal, both of them (in their own way) are chewing a twig. « We have discovered this place two years ago and since then we come here almost every day. »

Actually, in this restaurant, succulent meals made of fonio, local rice, millet, corn and niébé are regularly prepared. « I propose to my clients millet couscous as garnish of broiled thiof (= grouper) » explains the restaurant keeper. Bineta also innovates in the preparation of local meals such as fonio croquette, meatballs, pancakes or Yassa with local brown rice instead of imported white rice.

« I could not really imagine the « consume Senegalese ». For me it's an empty motto. But here, we can really live it »pleads Cheikh. Bineta receives between 150 and 200 people a day in her restaurant, among whom foreign customers but also diabetics sent by hospitals to eat fonio, good for their illness. « I also sometimes sell my fonio couscous to great foreign restaurants » says Bineta. It is useless to say that at this cordon bleu's restaurant, pots are always hot. And now, Bineta is consulted for her talents as caterer, specialized in cocktail parties, buffet meals and other events.

Last March, she won in Mali the award called « Cuisine d'Afrique » (= African cooking) for which Mali but also Benin, Burkina and Senegal competed. And Bineta wants to go further : even if the taxes she pays for her 14 salaried are a little bit steep, she wants to share her experience with other cordons-bleus, surely women...

HERE ARE SOME TREASURES OF THE SENEGALESE COOKING.

Gastronomy is one of the treasures of Senegal. With few ingredients, housewives manage to propose a whole series of meals and desserts. Here are two recipes relatively easy to make.

- Yassa and Chicken (with rice and onion sauce)
- Tieboudien (rice and fish).

THE YASSA AND CHICKEN (with rice and onion sauce) is a simple, quick and delicious recipe.

Ingredients for 4 people :

- 1 chicken
- 4 lemons
- 4 big onions
- 4 soup spoons of groundnut oil.
- 250 grammes rice.
- salt/pepper.
- 1 red capsicum
- water.

Pull the chicken to pieces and leave it marinate 2 hours long with the oil, the juice and peel of lemon, the sliced onions, the capsicum pulled to pieces, salt and pepper. Stir the chicken pieces so that they are impregnated with the marinade.

Drain the chicken pieces and broil each side in a stewpan.

Put the pieces out of the stewpan and brown the drained onions with the groundnut oil.

Leave cook gently.

Add the marinade and the chicken pieces and water down.

Let simmer 45 minutes and serve with rice.

THE TIEBBOUDIEN (rice and fish) is a traditional meal generally composed of Tiof, a local fish. But you can replace it by hake or lean fish such as stockfish, haddock ; gilthead bream... Usually, the fish is served in a service dish, the rice in another and the juice from the cooking in a sauce-boat..

Ingredients for 5 people :

- 1 kg fresh fish and 100 g dried fish
- half a green cabbage.
- 100 g tomato concentrate.
- 200 g manioc.
- 200 g carrots.
- 200 g turnips.
- 2 onions.
- 200 g eggplants.
- salt/pepper.
- 2 red capsicum
- 1 kg rice.
- groundnut oil.
- parsley.

Pull the fish to pieces of around 100 g.

Prepare the stuffing : grind one onion, the parsley and a capsicum in a mortar ; add salt ; lard each fish piece and put a little bit of the stuffing in it.

In a stewpan, put the oil on to heat and brown the fish pieces. Put the onions in the stewpan and cook them until they turn pale yellow ; add the tomato concentrate and a bowl water.

Stir and cook 15 minutes over a middle heat.

As soon as the oil rises again, add one liter water and two soup spoons of salt.

Also add a capsicum in the stewpan to give taste to the sauce.

As soon as water boils, add the cabbage, the carrots and the manioc. Let simmer 40 minutes. Add the turnips and eggplant. Let simmer 20 minutes.

Then, put the vegetable and the fish out of the stewpan in order just to keep the sauce.

Put the rice in the sauce, cover the stewpan and let it cook 40 minutes over a low heat.

LIFESTYLE.

THE TRADITIONAL WRESTLING.

THE SENEGALESE WRESTLING : WHY AND HOW.

The Serere ethnic group, situated in the surrounding areas of Dakar, is the melting pot of an ancestral sport that finds its mythological roots in the crossing of pastoral population and in the geniuses of nature.

From time immemorial, pacific joust have confronted the kuus (local dwarf divinities) with shepherds of the deep country. These confrontings, at first with an aspect of play but always unequal, show the predominance of the forces of nature over mankind, who has to follow the rules and whims of its environment.

By dint of perseverance, man can manage to win a modest victory over the geniuses. Correlation between training and failure is essential for the assertion of the fighter.

Thanks to a cotton strip that encircles the skilled fighter, the divinity is dubbed a man. This element is nowadays an essential part of the traditional dress that the wrestlers wear when they enter the ring.

It is such a process that guides nowadays the Senegalese youth into wrestling : a will to appropriate a place while accepting the social rules based on battles of wills. Wrestling enables, through its codes, to fight one's peers on equal terms according to « democratic » rules. Besides, it concentrates the vital energy of the fighters and develops a choreography that also takes part in the assertion of their sexual maturity. This body language is now part of the means of seduction.

How is it possible, when you are a Senegalese young woman , not to dream of a tall, strong and handsome athlete who amazes because of his presence and on whom mature women heap praise ?

AN EARLY TRAINING.

In the coastal countrysides or villages, young boys learn very soon how to live according to the common rules of the group they belong to. After lots of confrontations, the members choose a victorious leader. But wrestling trainings are also taught in official sessions, organized by the whole village as soon as work in the fields are quite over (mid-August). Some children make the circle of the arena and begin to animate it with their confrontations. Then, there is a succession of groups ranging from the youngest to the oldest, to the « a kuk » (teenage unskilled workers) and at the end to the famous wrestlers. The latter are extolled thanks to animated poems sung by women chorus.

The experienced wrestler can be recognized thanks to his special dress, which reminds the signs of rites of passage, while it remains functional : leggings and undershirts to enable holdings, but also small bells, charms or headbands, with sacrificial or simply poetic functions. Sometimes, the wrestlers can wear a ceremonial dress called the « yahal ». The wrestler arrival is also accompanied by incantatory process to protect the wrestler by situating him in the heart of an energy stream determined by the cardinal points.

These too long and too pompous rituals, adapted to the scales of modern stadiums, have eventually become as exciting and famous as the very fight , for the modern public.

A SHORT SERERE LEXICON.

SERERE : Ethnic group of the East of Senegal famous for its wrestlers. We can find this ethnic group in the areas of Thies, Fatik, Djourbel and Kaolak.

MBIR : Undisputed champion who has become wrestling leader.

O JAND : Literally : the horn. It is the third wrestler in the hierarchy after the Mbir status.

A KUK : Teenage wrestler not officially skilled.

MBAP : Loincloth that makes up the dress of a training wrestler.

YAHAL : Cotton tunic that makes up the dress of a skilled wrestler.

PEOPLE AND LANGUAGE. ETHNIC GROUPS IN SENEGAL.

Many ethnic groups live in Senegal. Some of them have settled in the area for a long time and others arrived later, following the wars, conquests, droughts... According to Cheik Anta Diop, a Senegalese historian, Egypt was the birthplace of the main tribes of the country and of Gambia. He bases his theory on many archeological or linguistic signs and on different sources, notably coming from the African oral tradition but also from Greek and Arabian written documents. But among the main ethnic groups we often find subgroups whose language is sometimes very different from the other subgroups of the same ethnic group. Things are becoming all the more complicated that population census in Africa is extremely difficult because of the high mobility of the inhabitants and of a still growing register. Let us try to make it clear...

The Wolofs-Lébous-Sérères: this group composed of three ethnic groups gathers the population of Northern Senegal. They are a majority and most of them are Muslim. They have been in power since they gained independence.

The Wolofs make up the most important ethnic group. Thanks to their number (27%) they have imposed their language as the national language and nowadays, 80% of the population speaks Wolof. Traditionally, the Wolof are sedentary farmers and produce the main part of the country's groundnut. Whereas they are not naturally traders they have nevertheless some shops throughout the country. In spite of their number majority, they have never been in power as long as the Sérère (whereas they were less numerous). They are very welcoming and the housekeepers are the cordons bleus of the country – moreover they have created the desserts in Senegal with the Fondé and the Lakh. 99% of them are Muslim and they represent the majority of the Talibés of the Mouride confraternity.

The Sérères (17%) are the undeniable elite of the country. As they hold key positions in the authorities or they lead big companies, their power give them an historical importance. The first President, Léopold Sédar Senghor, was Sérère. While many Sérère are Muslim, they also represent the second and oldest Catholic community of the country. Nowadays, we can find churches and chapels in every village. Thanks to the catholic community and above all through its efficient and famous schools, the Sérère have created the grey matter of Senegal. They have by far the best literacy rate of the country. On the cultural and historical side, the Sérère have been famous warriors and are at the root of the national sport: the Sérère wrestling, to the great delight of the Sunday's television viewers.

The Lébous (7%): whereas they are an independent ethnic group, they have quite entirely become Wolofs. They are the first and main inhabitants of Cap-Vert. They are fishermen and live in the biggest and more modern city of the country (Dakar) but their literacy rate is disgraceful. Most of them are Muslim of the Layène confraternity. They are more and more associated with the Wolofs, whose dialect they have almost entirely adopted.

The Peuhls-Toucouleurs-Sarakolés: This group, present in the whole area, comes from the most desert regions of Senegal and Mali. As real nomads we can find them in many countries of West Africa despite their gradual settling. They are at the root of the Islamization of the country's other ethnic groups.

The Peuhls (5%) are one of the most famous and scattered ethnic group of the country. They are Orthodox Muslim or members of the Tidjane confraternity and their traditional activity is stock breeding. But, years after years, because of the bad climatic conditions and the demographical boom they have made other jobs mainly hairdressers, taxidrivers and retailers. They are little educated and neither have political nor business key positions.

The Toucouleurs (10%) . They are historically and socially very close to the Peuhls and live in the same areas as them. But they have a more important place in the economic life of the country. They are the great warriors of the country. As great salesmen, they have an important number of little shops. Masters at the art of broiled meat, they have opened many “dibiteries” so that they can sell the meat of the sheeps grown by their family.

The Soninkés (also called Sarakolés) represent almost 3% of the Senegalese population.

The Forestiers live in Casamance. Most of them are Catholic but they have a far Animist tradition that they often want to preserve. Among the Forestiers we can find the Diolas, by far the majoritary ethnic group, but also the Balantes, the Mankagnes, the Karolinkas, the Baïnouks and the Pepels.

Among the Niaks and Mandingues ethnic groups, we can find the Malinkés, considered as the great wizards of Senegal- their fetish animal, the lion, is present in all the stories and legends- and the Bambaras.

There are also in Senegal few rare aboriginal ethnic groups such as the Bassaris, the Tendas Bediks, the Coniaguais, the Diarankés, the Niominkas and Soninkés.

The inhabitants from North Africa and the Middle East are generally called the Nakhs. In Senegal they are very important because they make up the first foreign community, just before the French. The two represented nationalities are the Lebanese, who mainly work in fabrics and in fast food restaurants and the Maures. For two or three years, Algerians in large number have settled in the area of Dakar. But the Maures from Moritania remain the more numerous Nakhs. A big part of the small Senegalese business belongs to them and represents one of their two activities (the second one is the production of jewel and other silver things).

DO YOU SPEAK WOLOF?

When it became independent, Senegal, like most of the French-speaking countries, chose French as the official language, as it is written in article 1 of the Constitution. According to this institutional clause, the French became the language of the Republic Presidency, National Assembly, public authority, court of justice, armed and police forces, education at all levels, advertising, media... When Léopold Sédar Senghor-a poet and linguist man- took power, Senegal entered the way of national languages improvement. The six most important languages of the country have been codified and have been endowed with an alphabet. In 1971 thanks to an Order in Council, six national languages were said “national languages”: the Wolof, the Peul, the Sévère, the Diola, the Malinké and the Soninké.

In practice, national languages have only started to be taught in 1978 and were limited to the two first primary classes. In 1981, there were only about fifteen classes, all in Wolof, excepted an experimental class in Sérère.

The French should still keep its priviledged status for a long time - the other main language is the Wolof – and this for two main reasons: 86% of the illiterate Senegalese want to learn French to have a good situation; the Wolof is already used as common language by at least 80% of the population and, as a consequence, is considered as an important language at school. The advantage that the Wolof has in comparison with the other national languages can less be explained by the number of Wolof natives or by their geographic distribution, than because the first links with colonial powers were made with the Wolofs and lead to present the Wolof empire as a centre of attention of the other ethnic groups. The first businesses and the development of groundnut growings appeared in a Wolof area.

You will find few Wolof expressions that will enable you to amaze your hosts during your future holidays in Senegal. And for the buffs, we give you the address of a website that proposes Wolof lessons so that you won't say "degouma ouolof"!!!

How are you ? Nanga def ?
I'm fine. Mangi fi rek
What is your name? Nanga toud?
Where do you live? Fan nge deuk?
How does it cost? Bi niata?
It is too expensive. Cher na trop.
It is nice. Rafet na.
You are beautiful. Rafet nga.
Thank you. Dieuredieuf.
Dad. Baye.
Mum. Yaye.
I have lost my way. Dama rère.
I don't understand Wolof. Degouma ouolof.
I like you very much. Nobnala trope.
Hello. Diama Ngma.
Good Bye. Fanane diam.

The numbers.

1: ben
2: niar
3: niet
4: nient
5: diourome
6: diourome ben
7: diourome niar
8: diourome niet
9: diourome nient
10: fouk
11: fouk ak ben
12: fouk ak niar
13: fouk ak niet
14: fouk ak nient
15: fouk ak diourome
16: fouk ak diourom ben
17: fouk ak diourome niar
18: fouk ak diourome niet
19: fouk ak diourome nient
20: niar fouk

To learn Wolof:

<http://www.senegalaisement.com/body/bodywolof.htm>

THE PEOPLE.

PORTRAITS OF 10 GREAT FIGURES OF DAKAR.

Famous or less famous singers, writers, architects, presidents, designers, creators... all these faces, all these jobs are composing the city of Dakar. A meeting with different celebrities, who all have a common point: their affection for a city, for their country that, thanks to them, we better know.

ISMAËL LÔ, A MUSICIAN. THE AFRICAN "BOB DYLAN".

He was born in August 1956 in Niger, where his father worked. With Youssou N'Dour, Ismaël Lô, also nicknamed Iso Lô in Dakar, is one of the most famous Senegalese musicians of the world. One of his last singles "Tajabone" has illustrated Pedro Almodovar's movie called "All About My Mother". Since he separated from the Super Diamono orchestra in 1984, he has recorded several albums one after the other, has made a series of success and worldwide tours but has never forgotten his sense of simplicity and joviality. And yet, Ismaël Lô was not really intended for being a musician.

In fact, very early, he was going into painting. "I have already started painting when I was at school. By the way, I've had few problems, he confesses, because I used to draw my teachers during the courses and one of them took it very badly. She was my French teacher and she decided to expel me from her classroom for a week".

But Ismaël persisted and after a few months at the Art School of Dakar, he organized his first exhibition in Spain in 1990. But very quickly, music has become stronger and the singer has not made any exhibition anymore. "I still paint at home, especially during Ramadan time, I need inspiration."

His inspiration? He has always found it when we have asked him to devote himself to little games namely to summarize his life in 10 dates – and it is a difficult game – and to give his opinion on unexpected themes... All of this with humour and sincerity...

What is your idea of good luck?

For me, good luck is being happy, having a family and making a success of things.

Which trait of character do you prefer in you?

Tolerance.

Which trait of character do you hate in you?

Spite. I am always fighting not to be spiteful.

What is your main fight?

Peace in the world and African unity. I sincerely hope so and one cannot go on without hope. It has been Europe's turn, it will soon be Africa's one.

Which quality do you most appreciate for a woman?

Hospitality, teranga as we call it, and smile. In fact, Senegalese is synonymous with hospitality, isn't it?

What is your biggest regret?

I can't tell you, it's a secret...

What is your motto?

I don't know. I think I haven't got any.

And what do you think when we speak about the French-speaking world?
For me, it is the most opened and largest means of communication. It is a real family which has to grow every day. Thanks to it, I fill well in all the continents.

ISMAËL LÔ'S IMPORTANT DATES.

August 30th 1956 : It is the day I was born and it is very important for me. I always wonder how I looked like, how the atmosphere in my family was when I arrived...

1970: Death of my father.

1979: I received my first harmonica carrier which I hung on my room's wall. My first public was the wall!

1980: I got married.

1981: The birth of my first daughter, Marie. She is called after my older sister, who was called after one grandmother. It can be strange for a Muslim, who I am, to choose this name but... it is perhaps a way of showing the good cohabitation of Senegalese Muslims and Christians.

It is also the year of my first international record.

1990: Nelson Mandela's release in South Africa. I think it is a very important date for the world because it means the end of apartheid.

1993: My first travel in Niger during an African tour; it is the country where I was born. I managed to meet all my maternal family, who I just knew through pictures and letters.

1997: The death of a Tidjane religious chief. I was very struck by this event as a Muslim because I am very religious. I think that religion is wonderful because thanks to it one becomes stronger, more tolerant and more opened on the world.

1997 again: I visit Mecca for the first time.

March 19th 2000: there is alternation in Senegal. It was perhaps a lesson of democracy for all Africa but it is above all a big event for Senegal because we didn't know what would happen. We could fear violences. But everybody kept calm and we are very proud and honored to be Senegalese.

MUSIC.

You can discover a song of Ismaël Lô on the Web

http://www.rfiradio.com/RA/SF_212_DIBI_DIBI_REK.ram

To learn more

<http://www.rfimusique.com>

OUSMANE SOW, A SCULPTOR.

THE HANDS OF GOOD.

At first physiotherapist and then sculptor, Ousmane Sow (a Dakarian by birth) has become an international star. His hands, that used to treat bodies are perhaps treating our souls, by offering a human being as great as delicate.

Ousmane Sow was born in Dakar in 1935, in a family composed of 10 children. He was the 6th child of his father and the 3rd one of his mother. When he was very young, he was already fond of sculpting and offered to his teacher, faces sculpted in calcareous stones that he

found on the beach. When he was 22, he arrived in Paris full of dreams but with very few things to realize them. He did not study at the Art School but began physiotherapist studies after being male nurse. He remained a physiotherapist for 20 years, transforming at night his consulting room into a sculpture room. In 1978, he came back to Dakar for good “the only city in the world where I definitively want to live” and created the physiotherapy service of “Le Dantec” hospital. He more and more devoted himself to sculpture and definitely gave up his job as physiotherapist in 1989.

It does not remain anything or almost anything from his first works. He has destroyed or given everything perhaps because whereas he has always sculpted, he has never thought of doing it as a job. While he was looking at Leni Riefensthal photographs of the Noubas, an ethnic group massacred by Islamic fundamentalists in the Sudan, it made something go click. After a four-year work, twelve monumental sculptures – they are 2.50 meters high – came out of his hands. It was a real shock, probably linked with the “personality” of these colossuses with a melancholy expression in the eyes. He has borrowed his technique from the jaga tradition, which, in Wolof, means recycling, recovery: an iron frame covered with plastic bags and old hessian, all this coated with a material, HIS material, made of a heap of glue or resin waste. In his hands, the material becomes a spongy mud which he sometimes let macerate four years before using it. “About the material I use, I have gradually managed to reach what I wanted to do. I am still looking for a better material but unhurriedly because the day I will be sure to have reached exactly what I wanted, I will lose the great pleasure of making my own mix”, he says.

The Noubas were displayed for the first time in 1988 at the “Centre Culturel Français” (French cultural center) of Dakar. They have then travelled in Marseilles, Venice or in Germany and were followed by the series of Massais, Zoulous and Peuls. And then, it was the Indians’ turn, a monumental series of 23 characters and eight horses recounting the Little Big Horn battle (1877), during which US general Custer’s troops lost in front of Sioux chief Sitting Bull. His Indians were displayed in 1999 in Dakar at the “Mémorial de Gorée” site, and then arrived on the “Pont des Arts” in Paris. Until now, Ousmane Sow has only sculpted forgotten or disappearing ethnic groups, is it a coincidence? For him, they are only humanity brothers: “I represent the mankind, that’s all!”...

THE PEOPLE PORTRAIT AMINATA SOW FALL AT SIGHT.

Aminata Sow Fall speaks as she writes, soundly. Each word, each blank between two sentences are full of meaning. This great woman is one of the most famous writers of Senegal. Almost all her books are or have been on the syllabus in African secondary schools and universities, but also in the French-speaking and English-speaking world. As the writer of several articles and lectures, especially about the role of women in culture and literature, she was head of Literature and Literary Property (= Lettres et de la Propriété Intellectuelle) at the Senegalese Department of Culture, creator of the African Center of animation and cultural exchanges, of the African Office for the Defence of Writer’s Freedom, of the International Center of Study, Research and Reactivation of Literature, Arts and Culture, and she was awarded several decorations. And nevertheless...Aminata Sow Fall uses the same time to conjugate honor and glory as to conjugate private history and writing, the time of hindsight. Thanks to this hindsight, she can face events and integrate them as a part of

herself, of her existence as Senegalese and African woman. Here are some of her sentences about her view of life.

Happiness: "It is not an absolute concept which can be defined for all the people. As far as I am concerned, I am happy when I feel free, when I can live my physical, moral and intellectual integrity in dignity and when I acknowledge this freedom to others. When you reach that, you can reach everything."

French-speaking world: "I naturally entered it when I was young because I went to the French school. It is neither a painful experience nor a heartbreaking subject. At that time, my mother tongue, the Wolof, was neither transcribed nor written, French was my means of communication. When fully grown, I thought about the question and I realized that it was part of my own history. I have integrated it as a big part of the Senegalese community. It enriched my mind. That's the way I consider the French-speaking world, without any theory. In the same way as Cheikh Amadou Bamba -creator of the Mouride confraternity in Senegal- has integrated Arabic without disowning his origins."

Family: "For me, she is sacred. I would not have become who I am without her. It is a place of balance and happiness. It is in the very nature of man to have a nest, a cradle, a home".

Candor: "It is my favourite trait of character. It is difficult to cultivate it because one does not always understand it. But I am certain of something: you can be candid with yourself only if you can be candid with the others. Therefore, thanks to candor, you can find the truth, and truth is always stronger."

Regrets: "I have no regrets, it is not part of me. It is perhaps linked with the fact that I do not fight with passion to reach something. I only have aspirations. When I want to write a novel, I write it but I will not fight to have it published or to have success. I just submit my ambitions to God and I get to work."

Faith: "For me, God has a supreme importance which includes tolerance. When one lives one's faith with sincerity and dignity, tolerance is never far away. Human dignity is the fight of all my life."

10 DATES OF AMINATA SOW FALL'S LIFE.

April 27th 1941: She was born in Saint-Denis, in Senegal.

October 1962: Her first travel abroad. She discovered the world and Paris.

March 30th 1963: "To define life stages in Senegal, one speaks about rites of passage. For me, it is an important rite because it is the day I got married.

April 1973: She finished her first novel called "Le revenant" (= the ghost).

May 1979: Her book called "La grève des battus" is published. "It is an important stage because thanks to this book, I entered the international stage. It is translated into several foreign languages such as Chinese, German or Finnish".

December 1979: She gave up teaching in order to lead the Literature and Literary Property at the Department of Culture. She has remained head for 10 years.

1987: She created the African Center of Animation and Cultural Exchange.

May 1997: She is promoted "Docteur honoris causa" by a Massachusetts' university at the same time as Madeleine Albright.

May 2000: Screen adaptation of her novel "La grève des battus", after its stage adaptation. The screenwriter is American, the producer is French and the actors are American and African.

Aminata Sow Fall's latest novel.

Le Serpent à Plumes. Edition, Motifs Collection

Thanks to this fifth novel, we enter the complex African memory, woven around songs, the songs which celebrate descendants of ancient heroes, builders and great warriors. The stake of memory is the place that one has nowadays within the society. But the weaving can also be teared by the intrusion of the "modern" world following the Independencies...We can find a multiplying of characters, time, castes, and everywhere, always, the words that root to the ground or crush. Through accounts and dialogs, sentences of Griots, women, chiefs, we are taken in procession up to the patriarch's jujube tree, where the rebirth will occur... For the lovers, one of the most famous books of Aminata Sow Fall called "La grève des battu" was republished in March 2001 by the Serpent à Plumes Editions. In this book, the author imagins that the beggars of the city, fed up with the government's persecutions, would be on strike and would refuse to beg. Now, as a real Muslim has to make offerings, life quickly becomes unbearable. It is a great classic of African literature, of which director Cheick Oumar Sissoko made a movie called "Battu" with Isaach de Bankolé. The movie was presented in October during the fifth francophone film festival of Namur.

THE PEOPLE
PORTRAIT
COLLE SOW ARDO, A FASHION DESIGNER.
TALENT AND GRACE.

After she graduated from the "Coupe et Haute Couture" Institute of Paris, Colle Sow Ardo created her own label in 1983, in Dakar (Senegal). Her asset: she was the first stylist to use loincloth for clothing purpose. Since then, people followed her example but her talent and kindness still attract the most elegant Senegalese women.

She began her career in Paris: she was at first a model before she started learning designing in a Parisian fashion house. When she came back in Dakar, she started working with silk. " I knew the material very well. But one day, a friend of mine came with a piece of loincloth so that I could make her a cloth. At first, I was a little bit unwilling, but as she insisted, I gave in". The cloth was presented during a fashion parade and...it was a great success. In spite of the problems linked with the very material: "It is above all a problem of color. When you stop the weaving to change the bobbin, it is extremely difficult to have the same color because the weaving is always different".

At the beginning, the pretty designer, who created unique models, started to position in haute couture. Nowadays, she prefers speaking about luxury ready-to-wear.

She has been imitated a lot but has no grudge against it: "I am a real believer and I think that God always rewards those who deserve it. It does not hurt me to see that I have been imitated but to see that the newly arrived designers are sometimes more helped than I am."

In fact, whereas as Senegalese creation ambassadress, Colle has presented her models in several fashion shows and parades in the world, she must sell a big quantity to go on. And it is not easy when you want, like Colle, to keep above all a quality label: "I am not sure that on a big scale, my creations will keep the same prestige", she says. However that may be, in 1989, Colle Sow Ardo, among other creations, created the suits of the Dakar's stopover hostesses of Air Afrique company and, the air hostesses of the whole company in 1991 (design and making). In addition to her shop in Dakar situated on the Mohammed V avenue, her models are also sold in shops in Brazzaville, Libreville and new York. She is now hoping to rapidly find partners in Paris and Washington to represent her.

**ABDOULAYE WADE :
PRESIDENT OF SENEGAL :
THE “SOPI” OF THE PRESIDENT.**

Since he was elected president of the Senegalese Republic in March 2000, this seventy-year-old man, very famous among the young people, has had an only credo: the *sopi* – change in Wolof. Here is a little introduction of this attorney who has become president.

Abdoulaye Wade, or Master Wade as his sympathizers call him, was born on May 29th 1926 in Saint-Louis. His father was a trader, “ but I only inherited a carpet of prayers from him” he enjoys saying; his mother came from Casamance. Very quickly, the child proved to be gifted for studies. After he got his teacher degree, he took his baccalauréat as a free candidate and passed it in 1949. While he was a boarding teacher in a Dakarian secondary school, he got a grant to finish his studies in France. “Finish” is not exactly the right word because it was rather a real series of degrees: Math Sup in Paris, at the Condorcet secondary school, then psychology, sociology and law in Besançon (the city where he met his wife Viviane), two higher education degrees in economics and public law in Dijon and finally a CES (certificate so obtained) in psychology of social life and a doctorate of law and economics in Grenoble! At the same time, he also took few responsibilities in student associations such as the FEANF, the federation of Black African students in France. He was one of the first Africans to go to Besançon’s university of law.

He came back in Senegal in 1960 and opened a law firm while giving law courses. As he was very attracted by politics, he joined the UPS (Senegaleses Progressive Union) of president Léopold Sédar Senghor. A few years later, the latter said about Abdoulaye Wade, whereas they were both running for the presidential election: “how can a man, whose head cannot hold on his head, be able to lead a country”! Nevertheless it is what happened, after a difficult way, punctuated with periods of jail, cohabitation and rivalries.

From Paris, where he came in October 1998, Abdoulaye Wade prepared his campaign. Around his candidacy, he attracted three left-wing parties and also the leader of the “Alliance des forces de progrès” and in May of last year, he won the election with 58,5% of the votes as the candidate of the “Front pour l’Alternance” party. Bolstered by his recent success, the man whose famous clothes – a pair of suspenders on a blue shirt- were adopted by several young people, and father of two children , is trying to implement what he has been fighting for for years: the *sopi* (change). To be continued...

VIVIANE WADE,
FIRST LADY OF SENEGAL

Bisontine, it means coming from Besançon (in Eastern France) and white: nothing predisposed this sixty-eight-year-old woman to become the First Lady of Senegal. Nothing but love! She was 20 when she met Abdoulaye Wade and decided to marry him against her parents' opinion, who probably had nothing against the man but who feared that their daughter would not become integrated into the Senegalese city. And whereas her integration seemed to have posed no problem, "for the Senegalese, it does not matter that I am white; I am French but of Senegalese nationality", we cannot say that Viviane Wade's life in Senegal has started in calm.

In 1974, her husband created the first opposition party in Senegal and the rest of his political career was interrupted by several jail periods, which complicated Viviane's life as she was the mother of two children. But nothing broke her affection for a man, that, at that time, she first considered as a "fighter".

Nowadays, it is very different but Viviane does not want to be caught in a protocol. "The First Lady does not have to be a front door but a window on the outside for the President", she said in an interview for the Parisian newspaper "Libération". She intends, in spite of the pressures, to go on taking care of the "Pikine's embroiderers", a Dakarian suburb of more than one million inhabitants, to which she decided in 1977 to dedicate a part of her time. Whereas she did not know anything in sewing and even less in embroidery, she wanted above all to enable the Pikine women to be financially self-sufficient. And she had learned with them, while giving advice to draw the models and make the patterns. But she had to leave the house that she had bought in the Point E district and that she used as working shed. In fact, the palace keeper has explained to her that crossing the city twice a day with shrieking alarms was not the best thing to do. All right, the women will come to the palace!

Viviane Wade really wants to give a more modern image of the Senegalese First Lady. It is all the more coherent for a woman who lives with the president of the *sopi* – change in Wolof.

OUMOU SY, A CREATOR
OUMOU SY, BIT BY BIT.

As an autodidact, she makes everything: cloth, jewel, embroidery, dyeing, making up, decor, design, inside decor, haute couture, ready-to-wear. It is Oumou Sy, a Peuhl pretty young woman, who married a Frenchman and gave him five children.

She was born in 1952 in Podor, a city situated on the Senegal river's banks, in the area of Fouta. She had never gone to school but in 1996, she created "Metissacana" (which means "crossbreeding in coming" in Bambara), the first Internet Cafes in Dakar.

When she was young, she was neither allowed to dance nor to sing – girl's education was very strict in the family of the tidjane's confraternity Khalif, her father – that is the reason why she spent her time making clothes with materials, which she found here and there. And since then, her creations have been presented everywhere in the world during fashion shows or parades. The greatest Senegalese singers have been wearing her bubus and the greatest film makers have used her talents as costumier: the Senegalese Djibril Diop Mambety for "Hyènes", Ousmane Sembene for "Guelwar" and also Bernard Giraudeau, a French film maker for "Les caprices d'un fleuve".

Oumou Sy taught at the art school of Dakar and created "Leydi", her own Designing and Formation workshop in 1990, right in the heart of the Medina. On that occasion, she initiated the Carnaval of Dakar, an annual big fancy-dress parade in the streets of Dakar. Tireless, she has also created a week of fashion in Dakar, that takes place each year. In 2000, fashion designers have come from 15 different countries. Oumou Sy is waiting for more than thousand people for 2001.

Her collection of Kings and Queens' clothes, exposed in Europe and Africa have had the same success and she is preparing a book on this theme. Her last work is a virtual shop, accessible through the Metissacana website, in which one can admire and buy her latest creations from everywhere in the world.

Elusive, tireless, her secret is summarized in one sentence: "Life is so simple, I don't like being imprisoned". If you want to learn more, do not forget to watch the report made about her.

LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR, THE PRESIDENT-POET. AN IDEA OF LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR.

Léopold Sédar Senghor was born in October 1906. Man of letters, poet, narrator, thinker, man of action, president of Senegal during 20 years, he is now living in Normandy with his family. He has become immortal when he became member of the Académie Française. He will remain immortal especially in the heart of all those for whom culture dialogs, which Senghor has professed all his life, are a permanent fight.

Our task is difficult: drawing the portrait of a man, who does not want to speak in public anymore, and about whom so many people have already written. At the beginning, we have had a different idea: asking president Senghor to speak to us about Dakar, the people,

women, children of the city, about the areas that he prefers or simply where he went, and to turn over the pages of an album, his album, which is also the album of a whole nation: the Senegalese nation. But it was not possible.

And we changed our minds: looking for written articles of those who had managed to meet him, to see him or to follow the story of this little boy from Joal, the son of Basile Diogoye Senghor and Gnilane Bakhoun, who has become the prodigal son of this couple and of the whole Africa. And it is much less difficult because of the high number of documents. Some writers are specialists of the poet, others of the politician without forgetting those of the Negritude or of the Académie and also...historians, philosophers, sociologists, journalists... It has not been possible.

But our idea was dogged. So dogged as the prodige child from Joal, as the student of Louis-le-Grand secondary school, as the companion of Aimé Césaire and Léon Damas, as the first African graduate of Paris university, who has passed the grammar agrégation examination, as the upholder of the French-speaking world, as the emcee of the First International Congress of Black Artists, as the Senegalese president, as the first guest at the "Universe!" banquet.

And the idea found another idea. Hearing at the Senghor's voice, at the one who has reminded Joal and the griots' rhapsodies, who has celebrated the black woman and has sung her beauty, who has admitted his weariness of "going nowhere when I really want to go away", who has celebrated his country by giving it his anthem...who one has to hear to have one's own idea.

Some of Senghor's works.

Poetry:

« Oeuvre poétique » Editions du Seuil

Story :

« La belle histoire de Leuk le lièvre » in collaboration with Abdoulaye Sadi, Editions Hachette.

Essay :

« Léopold Senghor, la poésie de l'action, entretien avec Mohamed Aziza », Editions Stock.

« Ce que je crois », Editions Grasset.

PIERRE ATEPA GOUDIABY, AN ARCHITECT.
ATEPA, THE BUILDER.

The architect, who has grown in the Medina of Dakar, was born in 1947 in Baïla, a village of Casamance. Nowadays, he leads the biggest architect company of Senegal and one of the biggest of Africa.

The son of a merchant from Casamance took very young an interest in theater. He even led a company. But as his parents considered that this job was not in accordance with their ambitions, Pierre Atepa Goudiaby decided to become an architect. By chance or by necessity, his name, Atepa, means the builder in Diola, his origin ethnic group. The Diolas are the best architects of Africa. When he got his scientific "baccalauréat" degree, from the Blaise Diagne secondary school of Dakar, he went to New York, where he successively got an engineer degree in building science and an architect degree. The subject of his thesis is

all the more suggestive: “the African ideal city”! “ For me, he says, architecture is a dialog work; it is typically Senegalese to dialog.”

In 1975, he started with the construction of the head office of the African's Central Bank, a baobab-shaped building and one of the more majestic of Dakar. In 1977, he opened his own company and rapidly worked through the whole African continent: he also built a lecture room of 600 places and sixteen presidential villas for the summit of the Central African Heads of State in June 1999 in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea). Nowadays, he has settled his company everywhere: in Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Togo, Mauritania, Chad, democratic Congo or also Burkina Faso. He is president of the Association of Architects and of the African Union of Architects and he is also member of the International Architecture Society.

In 1985, he created Atepa Technologies, a company of technical, financial and estate engineering, which works everywhere throughout the continent. Pierre Goudiaby is always in a rush, always between two airplanes. He is working during more than 15 hours a day and he does not have much time to see his five daughters. But as an arts buff, he all the same finds the time to practise photography or walking. His ideal city remains in his head and everyone knows that one day or another, Atepa the builder will honor his name...

ABASSE NDIONE, A DETECTIVE NOVEL WRITER. A BLACK INKED PEN.

Abasse Ndione is a male nurse at Le Dantec hospital of Dakar and has seven children; he is also the writer of two detective novels, which shot him to the rank of leader of African whodunnit.

He was born in December 1946 in Bargny, a little traditional fishermen village situated around thirty kilometers off Dakar. For the moment, we only know few things about himself. But we have to study his books to reveal things about the one that many people already call the “African Flaubert”. It is a whole program!

In 1970, he wrote his first novel called “La vie en spirale” but only 10 years later, it was published in two volumes by the Nouvelles Editions Africaines and in 1998, it was rebought by the French Gallimard Editions, in the black and yellow collection called “Série noire”.

In his book, he tells the troubles of a young “yamba” dealer (cannabis in Senegal), where “spitikat” and “développeurs” – respectively sellers and smokers – took us along in a mad rush throughout the country. When it was published, the book caused a scandal but 5000 copies of it were sold. It is not so bad. Thanks to this success, Abasse Ndione decided to leave his job as a male nurse and to take early retirement to devote himself only to writing.

He seemed to have made the good choice according to the critics, who have favorably received his last novel called "Ramata", which has just been published by Gallimard in the collection "La noire":

" It is a wonderful novel, dark, strong and full of diversity like Africa".

" Ramata: it is special times, a tale that could come from the big stories of oral tradition; it is Black; it is great".

" A wonderful portrait of the Senegalese bourgeoisie."

" A plentiful book, multifaced, made of episodes and false bottoms, alignments and juxtapositions up to loose one's way".

This book is the story of a lady, Ramata, a poor student who married a district attorney, but who is above all pretty. " She was among the rare people, which God has shaped in a particularly meticulous way, to transform their physique into a very perfect work of art. She was neither tall nor small, neither thin nor fat, her complexion was neither light nor dark, and her face was as pleasing and appeasing as a moonlight in a forest, a sunrise in the high mountains or a sunset in a calm sea (...). It was impossible for a fine man , saintly or infidel, to look at her, in the face or from the back, and not to have lustful ideas in the head. She was pretty, very pretty, more than Gina Lollobrigida. And she knew it". She was pretty but also nasty, quarrelsome, conceited and unfaithful... In fact, she was very sad, but why? You can discover why on TV5, in the exclusive interview of Abasse Ndione.

THE PLACES THE MARKETS.

All the colors for all the flavors.

In Dakar, there are lots of markets. Traders or buyers from Senegal, Africa and elsewhere come to find or sell all the products you can think of. Everyone can find the right thing! Only claustrophobic people will feel bad because of the large crowd. Besides the colors, smells are particularly captivating when one crosses the narrow passages between the different sellers: from the smell of the "Thiouraye", Senegalese incense, to the smells of the spices coming from the whole world, to ripe mango's flavors, through the sea fragrances of the fresh fish... our sense of smell is disrupted! A pictorial visit of the most important markets of the city.

Kolobane:

It is the big national market. According to a Senegalese common saying, "you find everything in Kolobane", and when you see the market stalls of the sellers, it seems to be true: from secondhand books to color televisions, from worn shoes to ricebags, from a chicken to a pan, without forgetting few pickpockets, who do not discourage the buyers. You can make good deals if you know the country perfectly or if you come with a Senegalese.

Kermel:

It is one of the very nice markets of the Senegalese capital city, which has been revived after a serious fire. During the works, that lasted two years, the storekeepers have settled their stalls in the streets surrounding the Kermel square, causing trouble and jams. Such an "outside" trade is always obligatory, especially because of the renting prices asked under the market's cupola and, that is the reason why only few traders can afford to settle there, but ask equal or even higher prices than in France. One can find fruits, vegetables, meat, fishes and shellfishes and also all sorts of knick-knacks, materials, leather goods, flowers, sculptures and wicker baskets.

H.L.M.5:

Whereas here one can also find everything, this market is especially famous for its tailor-made materials and clothes. The best couturiers work there and, there is the biggest choice of materials of Dakar. Besides, there are neither crooks nor pickpockets because all the traders have their own shops. The whole market is covered and resembles an immense shopping arcade composed of several streets; it is a big advantage either when it is raining or when it is very hot. There is only one risk: to lose one's way!

Sandaga:

This market has succeeded because of its situation: in the very heart of Dakar, 200 meters far from the "Place de l'Indépendance". Tourists are almost as numerous as crooks. It is the paradise of imitation of all kinds, ranging from branded jeans to luxury French perfumes.

Tilène:

It is the best place for all food products. One can find the rarest, the most varied, the best and cheapest fruits and vegetables...and it is the same thing for meat. In Tilène, one can also find all the sorcery ingredients: monkey hands, croco heads, snake tails, dried reptiles...it is a whole program less tempting than the previous one! One can also find the jewelers' avenue, where Mauritanian and Senegalese sell very cheap gold, silver and metal jewels.

Soumbédioune:

The Soumbédioune market is above all famous for its consignments of fresh fishes. In Soumbédioune life is turning around fishing. Men, women and children have been working there for centuries, from dawn to dusk.

The Island of Gorée. The memory of shame.

Situated four kilometers off Dakar, at a twenty-minute crossing by boat (referred to as “la chaloupe”), the Island of Gorée is one of the most captivating places in Senegal. Its main characteristic is the perfect homogeneity of the architecture and, except for scores of black children playing in the streets, the baobabs and bougainvilleas growing here and there, the visitor could be inclined to think he is in a village of Provence.

Yet, the Island of Gorée’s history is definitely less idyllic. It was discovered in 1482 by Portuguese sailors under the orders of Denis Dias; the island was named “Palma” but is was also referred to as “Beseguiche” in period documents, and the locals called it “Bir” or “Ber”. The Dutch navy seized it in 1588; the island was then re-named “Goede Reede” (Good Harbour) hence its present name “Gorée”.

On November 1st 1677, vice admiral d’Estrées took hold of it on behalf of the king of France. In 1763, the Chevalier de Boufflers, Governor of Senegal, who was not fond of Saint-Louis moved his residence to Gorée. The island was then occupied by the English before it was restored to France in 1817. The island offered sailors many an advantage: safe moorage, close to a continent that offered great opportunities of commerce and facilities for the defence of the territory. Such reasons lead European nations to fight over possessing it. Gorée’s prosperity was due to commerce, mainly slave-trade, which was the very basis of the setting up of the American colonies’ economies.

Thus, Gorée was one of those places of transit where captives were gathered, locked up, then taken on board and shipped over the ocean. The abolishment of slavery in 1848 doomed the prospects the island dreamed of. Dakar was founded in 1857 and the whole activity moved there rapidly. The population of the island dwindled from 5,000 inhabitants in 1832 to 600 in 1931. The island was annexed to Dakar in 1927. Nowadays, the island is listed “Humanity Global Heritage”.

The Slaves’ House, witness of history.

“Slave trade was one of the major genocides humanity has ever known. During three centuries, Black Africans were relentless hounded from their homes, harassed, torn away from their native soil, tortured and humiliated. This massive and brutal trading of Black people made it possible for almost the whole of the New World to work out their political, economic and social realities. Actually, only the youngest, the most vigorous, the strongest were taken, after being parted from their mothers, thus disrupting the demographic balance of the country. That is how one can assert that Africa’s own development is still now years and years behind...” said Joseph Diagne, curator of the Slave’s House in Gorée. The current Slaves’ House was built around 1786 and renovated in 1990 by the “Gorée-Fraternité” association. In the House, there were masters’ accommodations and domestic slaves’ rooms, and also traded slaves’ cells. The latter only lived in dungeons while waiting for a slave ships for the Americas. Along the walls skirting the sea, one can see a narrow corridor holed with loopholes. In the middle of this corridor, which potential purpose was to protect the island, there is a door that directly leads onto the sea; it is called the door “from where one never comes back”.

There were between 150 and 200 human beings in the House, men, women and children separated by cells. They were seated, their back against the wall and their necks and arms were kept in position with iron collars. They were released only once a day so that they could relieve themselves. Their hygienic conditions were so disgusting that the first plague epidemic that stroke the island in 1779 came from this sanctuary. In this House, there were several families. The father, the mother and the child were always separated. Their

destination depended on the buyers: the father could be sent in Louisiana, the mother in Brazil or in Cuba and the child in Haiti or in the West Indies. When they left Gorée, they were called by numbers and not by their African names. When they arrived in the plantations, they took the name of their own White masters.

What a man cost depended on his weight and his musculature. As a man had to weigh minimum 60 kilograms to be sold, just before the sale, they were fattened like geese to reach the right weight. What a child cost depended on his teeth and for a woman, it depended on her breasts. Many times, young slave women had sexual relations with slave drivers and once they realized they were pregnant, they were released in the island or in Saint-Louis. Under the horseshoe-shaped stairs, there were oubliettes made for the rascaltrants.

There has been slavery in Gorée for three centuries: from 1535, with the first Portuguese slaveries, to 1848, when France abolished it. During these three centuries, 15 to 20 million Black people from whole West Africa, have left Gorée for the Americas. Six million died from deprivation or maltreatment. "Only those who lived between these walls have known what the costs of freedom were..."

Places

Let's go for a walk in Dakar

Dakar is a very nice city where one can see old monuments and also very modern ones. Here is a short pictorial walk throughout the most famous places of the Senegalese capital city.

The railroad station:

It was built in 1883 and is very unusual because of its baroque style.

La Cathédrale du Souvenir Africain (Cathedral of the African Memory):

The so-called "African Memory" cathedral, inaugurated in 1929, was consecrated in 1936 by Cardinal Verdier. Its neo-soudano-bysantine-style nave is big. The paintings on the ceiling are worth being seen. Sometimes, religious ceremonies are made by the cardinal.

La Place de l'Indépendance (The Independence Square):

It is the very heart of the city around which the main banks, travel agencies and airlines revolve.

Soumbédioune traditional village:

It was created in 1961. You will appreciate the biggest exhibition of home-made articles of Senegal. There are many different African masks, wooden articles, gold or silver jewels, leather, and all sorts of decorative articles and presents (masks, statues, leather goods, jewels, clothes, djambes...)

The Law Courts:

The law courts, inaugurated in 1959, is now falling into ruins.

The "Mamelles":

Situated at an altitude of 104 meters, "les Mamelles" is the highest point of Dakar area.

Dakar's harbor:

It can welcome several trading ships. One can see the container ships and their goods. It is also the place where one can find Gorée's landing stage.

The "Ministère des affaires étrangères et des Sénégalais de l'extérieur" (Senegalese State Department) :

It was at first a law courts and then the head office of the National Assembly.

The Chamber of Commerce:

It was built in 1926 and inaugurated on February 8th 1929. It is situated on the Independence Square.

The National Assembly:

At first the palace of the ex-AOF's "Grand Conseil", it became the head office of the French Union Assembly. Since the independencies, it has been the head office of the Senegalese Partnership.

The City Hall:

It is the head office of Dakar's city hall. It was built in 1914, where the "Pères du Saint Esprit" house has been since 1847. It was a mission built on a small religious granting, by the upper chief Lébou of the time. With a classical architecture, the city hall has been a listed building.

The House of the Elected Representative:

It is the head office of the Senegalese mayors' association.

The Great Mosque:

The Great Mosque is situated on the Pape Gueye FALL avenue. Its architecture has been inspired by the Mohamed V Great Mosque of Casablanca. Everywhere in the Mosque one can see several engraved mosaics (inside and outside the Mosque) and inside ornamental decorations. The minaret is as high as 67 meters. It is impossible to venture into the sanctuary instead of during the Friday's big prayer. Nevertheless, visitors have to be very discreet and will have to take off their shoes and make a donation (even a very small one) to the Mosque's charitable work. The Great Mosque was built by French and Moroccan architects and was inaugurated in 1964 by King Hassan II.

The Presidential Palace:

At first Governor General Roume's palace, it became the Presidential Palace on September 25th 1960. It symbolized the transfer of the French Western Africa's General Government in Dakar. It faces the ocean and is guarded by the famous "gardes rouges de la presidence" (presidency red guards).

The BCEAO:

It is the head office of the Central Bank of Africa's Western countries, built by Pierre Atepa Goudiaby.

Places.

Yoff, the fishing kingdom.

The village of Yoff, situated only few kilometers far from Dakar, is characterized by a very long history. This history is also linked with the history of an ethnic group: the Lébous (the last group which has settled in the Cap Vert peninsula since more than four centuries).

As a fishing village, Yoff has cultural and nautical traditions old of more than 600 years. Until today, fishing and its surrounding activities make up the population's main source of revenue.

The number of fishermen who work in Yoff depends on the seasons. Because of the fishermen emigration's system and of the number of occasional fishermen during the holidays (students), it is very difficult to have precise figures. The number of fishermen varies between 2,000 and 3,500. These fishermen are native people but also immigrants from Saint-Louis (the Guet Ndar), Kayar or from the small coast.

In Yoff, fishing is essentially a small-scale production with relatively modern technical means. In spite of limited technical means and an industrial fishing made far from the shore with modern trawlers, the fishing annual production in Yoff is always around 40,000 tons. It can even reach 50,000 to 60,000 tons according to the seasons. The kinds of fishes also vary according to the seasons: small sardine, tuna fish, swordfish, burbot...

There are different types of fishing in the village. The turning seine is a big seine from 350 to 400 meters. To practice it, one needs two mechanized pirogues and several work and instruments and equipments (rings, anchor, coding...) and a team of at least 15 fishermen. The turning seine is an active net of 40 meters in which fishes are being captured thanks to the encircling technique.

The beach seine is used in the areas with communal equipment. For such a technique, a lot of people are needed for the unloading. Most of the fishermen, native or immigrant ones, use the techniques of the angling and of the "frozen angling". The "frozen angling" includes technological innovations such the use of isothermal cases to preserve the fishes aboard the 3 to 7-meter-long pirogues.

Only a tiny majority of the fishermen use the diving technique.

In Yoff, the fishing fleet is composed of 50 to 500 pirogues, according to the season. Almost all the pirogue are now mechanized.

WOMEN TAKE IT OVER.

As soon as the fishes are unloaded, women (fishermen wives or families) generally take care of the retailing job. According to a monographical survey made in 1991, 420 retailers were working in Yoff's beach. For lack of appropriate transports, the served markets are the nearest: Yoff, Ouakam, Parcelles Assainies for the women who only want to sell on the beach. Because of the fish wholesaler, this job has been regressing. As middlemen between fishermen and local retailers, wholesalers directly trade with fishermen out at sea, where they go with pirogues; otherwise they are represented by "divers". Wholesalers supply the factories and export.

Hand-made processing is also mainly a women's activity. It enables to use the production surplus by processing unsold and bad fishes. Some fishes processed into salted-dried fishes are for the export.

Here are the main processing techniques: fermented products (Guedj – yet), salted and dried products (salé, tambadieng), dried products (pagne, yasse, féré, aileron) and smokecured products (kétiah, metorah).

**MATTERS
ABOUT HIV.
HIV IN SENEGAL: PROPERTIES OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE.**

Compared with other countries in Africa and in the world, Senegal is still relatively untouched. According to the data published by the "Programme National de lutte contre le Sida" (National program of fight against Aids) in December 1995, 1,800 Aids cases and 60,000 HIV positive people have been registered in the country.

Nevertheless, politician leaders consider HIV as an important issue, because they have noticed that, like in other countries, HIV is rapidly spreading. Having realized that, Senegal, which is now member of the program of fight against Aids in French-speaking Africa, has benefited, since the creation of the program in 1990, from several prevention implementations. These implementations are especially aiming at preventing from sexually transmitted illnesses, mainly responsible for HIV spreading in Africa. It is a capital fight when one knows that preventing or curing 100 syphilis cases is as expensive as preventing from 1,200 HIV cases!

Traditional medicine also spearheads the fight against HIV in Senegal. In fact, in Africa, it is known that 60% of ill people call on traditional healers, and this long before Aids appeared. According to the following statement, it seems to be a good reflex for patients infected with HIV: "my healer has advised me to take roots, that I drink as infusion, explains a sick person. And I have felt a little bit better for few weeks. It is very comforting instead of waiting for the tritherapy which we are not sure to obtain". The reason is that it costs 300,000 CFA francs a month! That has nothing to do with the 500 CFA francs given to the healer in return for a plant combination aiming at relieving sick people. It is obvious that healers play a main role in the patients' care. Thanks to traditional products, they achieve wonderful results in the treatments of opportunistic patients" says the leader of a network composed of above 450 healers in Senegal.

Researchers and HIV specialists in Africa seem to have acknowledged the use of fighting for a sometimes scorned medicine. In fact, during the first international conference on traditional medicine and HIV, held in March 1999 in Dakar, conventioners have advised that "healers and their co-workers of modern medicine should work together" and that healers should be integrated in research structures. Following the conference, an international healer committee has been created. It is aiming at checking that quacks, present in traditional medicine, would not disrupt the premisses of a potential collaboration between the two medicines.

AIDS: IRRATIONAL FEAR OF GIVING BLOOD.

For few years, there have been very few blood donors at the national blood transfusion Center of Dakar. They are afraid of being infected with HIV or learning that they are HIV infected.

At the national blood transfusion center of Dakar. There is hardly anyone around, this Friday. In a very small room, two women wearing a white coat are tirelessly searching in forms piled up on the table or carefully arranged in drawers. Near them, three young men and a young woman are hanging about. Two weeks ago, they have come for the first time to give their blood. Today, they are coming for the results of the examinations made on this occasion. It has rapidly become unbearable to wait. Finally, after few minutes, one of the women says: "You can come back!" What a relief...It means that they are uninfected with HIV, the Aids virus.

Only about twenty donors out of the two million inhabitants living in Dakar come each day to the national blood transfusion Center (nbtC): "Since the advent of the HIV, blood donors are rare. Some of the people are afraid of knowing their serology because at the center, we

make tests to be sure that they do not have any infectious illness. Some people also make the confusion between giving one's blood and being infected with HIV" explains Professor Lamine Diakhaté, head of the center, before adding: "some parents refuse to give their blood even to save their child..."

The fear of being infected like this is growing. According to statistics given by the center, only 0.4% of the population gives her blood. It is far from the standards of 2% of a country's population fixed by the WHO (World Health Organization). Whereas in Dakar three quarters of blood needs are satisfied, on the national scale, only two thirds are satisfied. Surprisingly, young people (20-35) , said to be the more exposed to HIV, are the most generous. Women, who need a lot of blood (due to pregnancies) represent only 10% of the donors.

To make up for this lack, "blood days" are being organized each year to recruit new donors, under the leadership of associations which organize events such as Dakar's marathon of May 2000. To encourage regular donors, medals and certificates are awarded.

According to the leaders of the national program of fight against Aids, the infection rate following a blood sample or a transfusion is almost nil. For nbtC's chef, there is no question about it: "we never use the same syringe for two people". Nevertheless, only one blood sample with an infected syringe can lead to an infection.

Moreover, according to official statistics, the prevalence Aids rate of Senegal is the lowest of subsaharan Africa: 1% against 4% in Benin and around 7% in the Ivory Coast. Such figures should theoretically reassure skeptics, win the loyalty of donors and avoid shortages.

- Syfia Agency -

SOULEYMANE MBOUP

President of Aids research network in Western and Central Africa.

Souleymane Mboup is a busy man. This former druggist now leads a state-of-the-art laboratory at "Le Dantec" hospital of Dakar. In this very laboratory, in which around fifty people are employed, the first description of HIV 2 was made in 1985, in collaboration with France and the United States. It is a great success for the one who trained himself at the Military School of Health of Dakar and started working, 25 years ago, in a little lab composed of four rooms. Souleymane Mboup, now 48, still finds the time to teach at the university and to train biologists coming from all the countries of French-speaking Africa. In his fight against Aids he has recently deplored the high costs of tritherapy for African patients and the lack of priority for the research of a vaccine in Africa.

MATTERS

INTERNET IN DAKAR

DAKAR SPINS ITS WEB

“A worldwide village is being built before our eyes”, said Senegalese Prime Minister Mustapha Niassé in his general policy speech in July 2000. Senegalese government intends to promote new technologies of communication and information. It is a hard task. In fact, Internet access costs are very dissuasive and among the few Senegalese who have the Internet, 98% of them live in Dakar. But, for those people, the Internet is magic!

“In 1995, I was invited to a conference on telematics stakes. Three years later, I decided to sell information on the Internet” says Babacar Diop, a shopkeeper. He was 28 and decided to get rid of his clothing shop to devote himself to e-business, without any regrets. His idea was to gather economic data about Senegal, enterprise news, financial and fiscal environment, business opportunities...At the beginning, all of this was gathered in his website and put at net surfers’ disposal free of charge. “I did this to be known. My website is in fact a window. It is made to attract customers.” Babacar Diop has managed to locate 132 chambers of commerce, to which he sent a letter explaining his activity. Answers came back from everywhere, especially from France and Germany. From this moment, the former shopkeeper has started selling his information at full price. He created a consulting agency with 25 co-workers, which nowadays have a turnover of 120 million CFA francs. And Babacar is full of praise for the Internet: “When you have several co-workers, the Internet is the best means of communication as for efficiency, rapidity and profitability. If one does not have access to the Internet, one has to use either the fax, or the phone or also the post. But, these means of transport are expensive and very slow. With the Internet, you save all this”.

All the information quickly.

Journalist students of the Cesti, the school of journalism of Dakar’s university, are also “Web lovers”. There, students do not have to meet their radio professors anymore to know which exercise they have to do. Each student directly receive his exercises in his own electronic letter box. The initiative, which concerns around fifteen students, comes from the radio professor or the school, who has integrated an initiation course of information and communication new technologies . “I started from the hypothesis according to which these technologies will disrupt the communication world. Teletypewriters do not exist anymore. Scissors for montages will disappear. All these disruptions will transform the radio”. The students store their interviews and reports in their computers. Then, they make the montage on the screen. The other interest of the Internet is to learn how to find better documents by searching on the Web. It is all the more obvious for many African countries, where information sources are rare and often impossible to reach. Cesti students have also learned how to use e-mail and to build websites. “These internet courses have lots of advantages, explains a student girl. Documentary search is quicker and one can speak with people everywhere in the world, on real time, without many costs and very quickly”.

A GENERATION LINK

Communication is the key word. In Yoff an in Dakar’s suburb, young people and old people renewed dialog thanks to the building of a website. In this big village composed of 50,000 inhabitants, near the airport and the sea, everything started in 1996 when the association for economic, cultural and social promotion had to organize an international conference called: “Integration of the wisdom of African traditional villages within a process of global ecological reconstruction”. It is a real program which, to succeed, had to integrate young and old people!” They thought of building a website to manage the “after conference” but also the land and cultural heritage of the village” explains the director of the Siup (urban popular information system). The website was created in December 1997. The seniors of the village

searched into their memories to recount the village's history, its beliefs, its governments styles. The young people rapidly started leaning data processing so that they could present and make up the traditions told by the old people. "As soon as they saw the village's map on the computer and we told them that thanks to a click we could get information about an area, the old people were amazed. Since then, they are more opened to the youngest and agree with them".

In 200 pages, the website provides nowadays a lot of information about Yoff, the village, its activities and inhabitants and also practical advice. Three popular information centers enable associations and inhabitants to surf on the web. In the centers, equipped with a computer, young people are on duty, print and sell the pages that interest people. The Seniors consider this initiative as a progress : opportunities for the young people, information and better knowledge of the village often shown as example to the other cities of the country and the continent. For them, like for all the inhabitants, it is a window to be known abroad. And it is true that if you search Yoff on a search engine, you arrive on the site, the very site that enabled old and young people to speak together again!...

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