

## THE DUGHWEDE IN NE-NIGERIA<sup>1</sup> MONTAGNARDS INTERACTING WITH THE SEASONS

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### The Dughwede and the people of the Gwoza Hills

The Gwoza Hills, NE Nigeria, the most northwesterly chain of the Mandara Mountains, have been sadly neglected by ethnographers. To understand the cultural past of the Mandara Mountains more completely they need to be studied thoroughly. Although this study focuses only on the Dughwede<sup>2</sup>, I will take this opportunity to indicate some new evidence on ethnic distribution and traditions of origin as part of a general introduction<sup>3</sup>. Let me first give some more basic information on the Dughwede.

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<sup>1</sup> The Dughwede speak a Chadic language similar to Mafa. In most publications Dughwede is spelt Dghwede or Dghweäe, without u and sometimes with an implosive ä (e.g. WOLFF 1971:72) (for the references see p. 172), but after consultations with Dughwede speakers, I am clear that it should be spelt as I spell it. Originally LUKAS (1964:82), spelt it Toghwede, which comes closer to my way of spelling it, Dughwede. Dughwede is, like all other languages spoken in the Mandara Mountains, apart from Fulfulde, a Chadic language. I use the popular way of spelling practised in the Gwoza Local Government Area by relying mainly on my field assistants. This means the lateral fricative is always spelled as th. The implosive d or b are spelled d or b. Tone marks are neglected.

<sup>2</sup> This was the first ethnographic study ever conducted among the Dughwede. It took place during August and September 1995, and was funded by a research project on „The History of Culture and Language in the Natural Environment of the West-African Savanna“. The fieldwork was carried out within the framework of the Joint Research Project of the Universities of Frankfurt and Maiduguri. I want to express my gratitude at this point to all the academic and administrative staff of the University of Maiduguri, as well as to my German colleagues (especially Prof. Braukämper), who have all been very supportive and understanding towards my research. I also want to thank the people of the Gwoza Local Government who very generously helped me to find my way safely. My special thanks to all village and ward heads, informants and new friends I have made. Grateful thanks go also to my field assistants, Imbrahim Ville, John Debawa and John Zacharias. Without them I would have not been able to speak to any of my informants in the first place.

<sup>3</sup> An ethnographic survey of the Gwoza Hills as a result of my last research from November and December 1994, also funded by a research project, will be published soon. As a result a first map and index (fig. 1 and 1a) showing the ethnic and language boundaries of the Gwoza Local Government Area is published in the context of this article.

The Dughwede are, with about 15 000 people living in the mountains, one of the remaining terrace farming societies still functioning in the Gwoza Local Government Area. Altogether there might be between 20 000 and 25 000 people, about 5 000 of whom might live in their two resettlement areas. One, Barawa, is found on the eastern side, limited by the international boundary with Cameroon, and the other one, Kwatara, is found on the western side, bordered by the Lamang village of Hambagda, traditionally known as Hidkala. Another 5 000 people are found in Gwoza Town itself, in Maiduguri and in other parts of Nigeria and even abroad. Many young men, in search of money to pay their high dowry or to buy land in the plains, go temporarily to the Lake Chad area to farm beans. This means a high proportion of the unmarried men are no longer to be found in the mountains. The part of the mountain area traditionally occupied by the Dughwede people starts immediately north of the 11th degree of northern latitude. It is a mountainous highland stretching over an area of about 100 square kilometres with a population density of about 150 people per square kilometre. These are only very rough estimates, since the last published census was carried out in 1961 and the figures from the latest one, conducted in 1991, are not yet available. Gwoza Local Government Area was inhabited by 161600 persons.

The Dughwede are the mountain population living between 900 and 1 200 metres at the highest, still populated part of the Gwoza Hills. North of the Dughwede, in a mountain saddle between 700 and 1 000 metres we find the Guduf, also still practising their terrace culture. Between Guduf and Dughwede, in the east, we find the Chikide and Chinene. Although the Chikide and Chinene have a common ethnic origin, the Chikide speak Guduf while the Chinene speak their own language. Most of the Chinene have already descended to the eastern plains. The other traditional montagnards are the Zelidva. They lived north of the Guduf in the highest places, as far up as 1 300 metres. Compared with Dughwede, the other high mountain area which is much narrower and stretches northwards is already almost completely abandoned. Only on the northern side and on the levels of 1 000 metres as far down as 800 metres towards the north of the Zelidva mountains do we find some very small but still functioning terrace farming communities.

South of Dughwede we soon reach the international boundary to Cameroon, cutting in a southwesterly direction through a vast and still quite densely populated mountain area, not documented at all. The people living there are Mafa, some of them still on the Nigerian side. Southwest of Dughwede, following the top ridge of the western part of the northern Mandara Mountains, we soon come to Gvoko, also known as Ngoshi. The international boundary turns back here to the south and cuts the Gvoko people (who live between 1 100 to 1 200 metres high up), into two groups, the bigger one living on the Nigerian side. South of Gvoko, the boundary runs along the high mountain ridge towards Turu, leaving the western slopes to Nigeria and the eastern slopes and the very populated vast mountainous highlands to

Cameroon. The people south of Gvoko, around Turu, are known as Hide, while the mountain population east of Gvoko are all Mafa. The western slopes of Turu ridge are mainly abandoned. The Wagga, Vemgo and Visik who used to live there seem to be related to the Lamang language group, although we are not clear how they trace their ethnic origin. The Lamang are increasingly adopting the ethnic identity of groups of people living at the foothills or plains along the western side of the Gwoza Hills as opposed to a mountain type of ethnicity.

The Lamang group consists of local groups of various ethnic origin partly of ethnic mountain and partly of ethnic plain, the latter often being of Margi origin. Traditionally, they were foothill dwellers but have now moved completely into the adjacent western plains of the Gwoza Hills. In the eastern plains, overlapping the international boundary, we find the Glavda. In terms of ethnic origin, the Glavda seem to be much more of an ethnic unity and therefore more of an ethnic group in the classical sense than the Lamang speaking groups. They all share the same ethnic origin going back to Gvoko or Ngoshe Sama. The latter means Ngoshe on the mountains as opposed to the main Glavda settlement Ngoshe Kasa, meaning Ngoshe in the plain. All Glavda trace their descent back to a common ancestor called Aga.

Around the northern foothills and plains of the Gwoza Hills we find Wandala speaking groups of mainly Guduf and Zelidva origin. The Zelidva speak also Glavda and Lamang, but maintain their ethnic origin by tracing it back to their common ancestor Kumba Zadva, who himself traced his descent from Dughwede. The Amuda and Ganjara, are closely related. While the Amuda are famous grain blessers, the Ganjara are highly estimated rainpriests within the whole region.

The Dughwede area, especially its southern part, Ghwa'a, seems to be a centre of ethnic distribution of many montagnard groups of the Gwoza Hills. Its most prominent summit with its three remarkable domes, called Durghwe, is a sacred centre, not only for the Dughwede, but also for the Guduf and the Chikide/Chinene. Although the local centre of distribution of these ethnic groups, including the Zelidva, is found in the area of the Dughwede land of today, their regional origin leads us even further south as far as Turu (Fitire). All these groups, including the Glavda, Gvoko and Hide trace their origin back to a common ancestor called Mbra, Ngra or Gra. I call this tradition the Turu tradition. It does not only show its common ancestry, in that a descent from a common mythical ancestor is claimed, but it also shows similarities in its cultural performances and other features like stone architecture and agricultural techniques. One very significant feature is a specific leather cap for the men and the calabash worn by the women to cover their heads. Apart from the architecture and the terrace farming system, most of these features are now dying out, but are still alive among the Guduf, Chikide and Dughwede. Among these three peoples the Dughwede are the most remote and the ones who live highest up in the mountains. Here we find a terrace culture still very much functioning in a traditional manner.

## The Turu tradition

In the northern Mandara Mountains, we find various traditions of origin. Although traditions of origin are not necessarily historical accounts, but rather about people telling us why they belong to a particular local or ethnic group, they often inform us about names of important places, which these groups like to refer to as places of common origin. Some traditions cover wider, others smaller areas of the same region. Some lead to ethnic unity, others to ethnic separation. The most important regional tradition of origin is the so-called Gudur tradition (JOUAUX 1989). We find the Gudur tradition also among the Dughwede. Other traditions cover only parts of the region, like, for example, the Sulede tradition (LAVERGNE 1944: 22) of the Mafa, or the Turu tradition of the Gwoza Hills.

The Turu tradition has only been discovered recently during my research in the Gwoza Hills. That such an important tradition of origin as the Turu tradition has not been fully recognised before shows the significant lack of ethnographic research conducted in the Gwoza Hills. This might have mainly to do with the fact that during British rule, they obviously did not bother since the area was only under British Trusteeship, and after independence the Nigerians also neglected the area of the Gwoza Hills, possibly due to its remoteness. Therefore not only the discovery of the Turu tradition, but any ethnographic information on the Gwoza Hills is almost new. In the Kaduna archive we find only the report from District Officer MATHEWS<sup>4</sup> from 1934 which contains valuable ethnographic information on the area. With regard to published material, there is nothing apart from very little which LUKAS collected in the late 1960s among the Guduf and some ethnographic accounts by WOLFF, a German linguist, collected and published since the 1970s. This will be reviewed by me in one of my next publications<sup>5</sup>. Quite well known is the article on traditional hill farming by the Assistant District Officer WHITE, from 1944, and not forget TUPPER-CAREY's article about the "Fattening of Cattle at Gwoza" which I came across only recently. Finally, there are some degree studies by students of various departments of the University of Maiduguri.

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<sup>4</sup> MATHEW's work on the "Mandated Hill Area" contains documentary material of traditions of origin, local and genealogical descent and language distribution. Most of the traditions given could still be identified 1994. Some of his facts reported do not exist anymore or are attributed to the wrong groups by confusing ethnicity and language. This might be due to the fact that he presumably conducted his research only in Hausa. Although I did not include his accounts in my questionnaire in the first place, it was always a great help and pleasure to discover how accurately MATHEWS has worked. It is a very valuable local historical document. He seems to be the first to come across what I call the Turu Tradition.

<sup>5</sup> The list of publications I give here is not complete. Since I aim to concentrate mainly on the Calendar of the Dughwede, it would lead too far to discuss the existing academic confusion about ethnic and language distribution of the Gwoza Hills.

## The theoretical background and the paleonigrific approach

To explore the cultural relationship an ethnic population has developed with and within its natural environment, it is necessary to study its behaviour and beliefs. One way to achieve that is to look at the social and seasonal activities of such a people from different points of view. Therefore the questions I asked at the beginning of this field study are:

- 1.) How does the calendar of the Dughwede regulate their cultural relationship with their natural environment?
- 2.) How are their actions and behaviour influenced by their social system and cosmological ideas?
- 3.) How do we interpret their way of interacting with the seasons?

These ideas have been inspired by reading about ecological anthropology. In his epilogue to "Pigs for the Ancestors", RAPPAPORT distinguishes between the "ritual cycle to be regulator rather than regulated". Instead of the ritual cycle being regulated e.g. by labour, "the ritual cycle constitutes, or at least codifies, the relations of production in Maring society. ... The ritual cycle is a sacred structure within which productive and reproductive activities (ecological, biological, and social) proceed, and in terms of which social, political, and ecological relations are defined and given meaning" (1984: 410). This is a strategic point to make and leads to RAPPAPORT's understanding of what he refers to as an ecosystem<sup>6</sup>. My study is a first step towards analysing the "local ecosystem" of the Dughwede. I only concentrate on understanding the conceptual framework of the social and cultural part of the system, which can be seen as a starting point towards interpreting and integrating further relevant data.

The terrace farms of the northern Mandara Mountains have often been referred to as an example of a typical paleonigrific culture<sup>7</sup>. Without going too deep into the discussion of the paleonigrific theory I want to say a few words about one development within the paleonigrific theory which is known as the theory of retreat ("Rückzugstheorie"). This theory was last theoretically refined by FROELICH (1964 and 1968) who says that a civilisation, relatively

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<sup>6</sup> RAPPAPORT argues that the criterion for establishing the boundaries of local ecosystems, in what was a continuous biotic association, was human territoriality. Therefore, he explains, these boundaries must be specified analytically. The domain of the regulatory operations of a local group, in this instance, defines an ecosystem (1993: 43f). Hereby RAPPAPORT includes culture or their constituents among the properties of populations (ibid 55f).

<sup>7</sup> BAUMANN (1940) had introduced the word "altnigrific", already being influenced by ANKERMANN (1905) who spoke of "altsudanisch" and FROBENIUS (1913) who preferred "äthiopisch". FROELICH (1968) was the last one who tried to theoretically develop the idea by speaking of a "civilisation paléonigrific" in contrast to a "civilisation néo-soudanaise". ANKERMANN and BAUMANN spoke of "jungsudanisch" and FROBENIUS (1939) "syrtyisch" to refer to this new civilisation following the ancient one.

unified, had occupied, during neolithic times, a great part of the geographical Sudan. Invasions of different origin then smashed the unity of this culture which led to so-called splinter groups ("Splittergruppen") who finally took refuge in the mountains or flooded land. The Mandara mountains are supposed to be one of these natural refuge areas. This theory relies on the invasion of other groups which finally led to occupying the mountains. I want to propose a distinction between political and environmental reasons for such a retreat. This allows us to look at the mountains not only as a refuge but also as a natural environment which offers natural advantages in itself. Many german speaking and francophone authors still go along with this idea of FROELICH. One interesting example is HALLAIRE who writes: "Les habitants des monts Mandara appartiennent à la civilisation paléo-soudanienne, dite également paléo-négritique" (1991: 33). Not only is HALLAIRE using this cultural historical notion to define a people, but she also spells it incorrectly. We need to differentiate between "négritique" and "nigritique". The first one refers to race and the second one only to culture. The culture we find in the Mandara Mountains of today is historically much more a result of the increasing slave raids in the last two or three hundred years than a result of a paleonigritic retreat. However, for environmental advantages, the mountains might have always been an attractive place to live, either for political as well as for natural reasons. Therefore, the mountains might have provided a unique creative cultural field at all times, but to label it a paleonigritic one is surely a mistake. This also applies to another line of thinking within the paleonigritic theory which is based more on the survival of certain ideas than of cultures. There are certainly very old ideas we find with the mountainous people, some ideas could be interpreted as drawing from antiquity. Such ideas are more archaeological than anthropological questions and can stop us from studying how these populations manage to survive as a sophisticated terrace culture society of African provenance. One good example of being trapped in this is FROELICH's idea of a "densité spatio-religieuse" (1968: 212) he found among montagnards of the geographical Sudan as being an indicator for a paleonigritic cultural field. My paper (1991) about the settlement structure of the Mafa demonstrates that being in control of land rights in a very densely populated segmentarian society has a very high symbolic priority indeed, but can be fully explained by a social anthropological approach. Also FROBENIUS (1913) spoke of the "unsträflichen Aethiopen" and mentioned the ritual density in their cultural life as being a proof for a very old paleonigritic mentality. To me it seems to be a very romantic idea guided rather by vision than by historical facts.

The problem is how to transport the ethnographic experience of possibly being confronted with ideas of great antiquity by passing on the spectacular quality of the message it obviously carries for us. TURNER, in a contribution to a symposium towards a "Theory of Cultural Performance", said about himself that his "work as an anthropologist has been the study of cumulative interactions over time in human groups of varying span and different cultures. These interactions", he found, "tend to amass toward the emergence of

sustained public action, and given my Western background, it was difficult to characterize these as other than dramatic" (1984: 19). I am quite sure TURNER is describing here also the cultural mood he felt himself from being an observer of the life of the Ndembu. To include the observer as an actor in actions his observations logically include seeing the published ethnographic record itself as cultural performance. I find this concept quite useful since it can help us to understand the cultural way the Dughwede relate to their natural environment in a less prejudgmental context by interpreting their cultural performances from a point of view of communication, especially when it comes to performances which are generally labelled as being magical. I tend to drop the word magic entirely when discussing serious metaphysical concepts, those which symbolically communicate religious ideas which spiritually interconnect this world, the world beyond and God within the individual mind of the traditional person in a culturally comprehensive way.

### The individual in the cosmological order

Since it is the person who has often been neglected by anthropologists for the advancement of the study of groups<sup>8</sup> I want to start this chapter with a model of how the Dughwede see the individual personality psychologically equipped. The Dughwede believe that having a soul is a natural part of personhood. The management of the psychological forces are important for the Dughwede and future actions or past events are regularly assessed in the context of divination and specific medical and religious applications. In the following passage I only state the words the Dughwede attach to the psychical agencies of the individual person.

The Dughwede distinguish between *safa* (soul) and *sdukwe* (spirit). The word *vagha* refers to the body. The individual person in general is *ga* which also means a group of people. The supreme God is *gwazgafte*, but also the name for the personal god of a male person is *gwazgafte*. Every male person has a personal god who holds a kind of guardianship for that individual. The personal god is only alive as long as the individual is alive. The spirit dies with someone's physical death. The idea of the spirit is drawn from the word for shadow of the physical body (*vagha sdukwe*). This image of the spirit being a psychical shadow of the individual person has very much in common with the psycho-analytical idea of the unconscious. While the spirit leaves this world with the body, the soul does not die. The difference between spirit and soul is significant, since it is the spirit which seems to be the vital element of a person. It is the spirit which can be attacked by witches (*wadighe*) and wizards (*zalghede*), wizards only being able to kill a male person. To care for the

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<sup>8</sup> GOODY refers to this problem in his edition of essays on Tallensi religion, a collection of articles written by Meyer Fortes mainly on the Tallensi. Especially "The concept of the person", originally published in 1971 which gives a good idea about how to focus on the person in the context of the group.

spirit, especially for a living male person, is important and involves divination (*dagha*) for diagnostic purposes and medicines (*ngurde*) to cure. Only a male person who is able to succeed in life has a chance to become an ancestor and to be cared for properly in the world beyond by his children.

The social and cosmological order of the Dughwede is psychologically interlinked by the spiritual dimension of the individual person. Some mythological beliefs are part of their cosmological concept of the world giving sense to important cultural achievements and institutions. These are essential to interpret the seasonal activities of Dughwede from an anthropological point of view. Mr. Ngatha, one of my main informants explained, that "from the beginning on there was one man and one woman created by God. They walked around to find something to eat and they found that they could eat stones. The stones were soft. As they continued doing this it happened that dog brought guinea corn and fire. God gave the guinea corn to dog to keep it where he lived. Dog ate the corn and when he came to earth he shat it out and it germinated from his excrement. Dog had brought the fire from heaven as well by carrying it on his tail. The corn was planted and it germinated and gave fruit heads. They planted it again and again, until a complete farmland was planted.

While they were in the process of planting the guinea corn, an old woman came along and urinated on the stones which were still soft. After she had done that the stones became hard. After the guinea corn was discovered they started eating it. Now they were thinking of making a sacrifice to their God. Therefore they picked some corn and put it into water. They threw the corn away and used the water for the sacrifice. Now one ugly woman came. She collected the guinea corn they had thrown away and put it into a pot. It lasted for a few days and it germinated. Then she ground it and cooked it for the first day. She cooked it again on the second day. She gathered the liquid part of it into one pot. She kept it and after two days it fermented. When they tried it, it tasted sweet and they liked it. They asked the woman how she had done it and the women explained it to them. Then everybody started doing it.

When they were enjoying guinea corn and traditional beer (*ghuze*), Haman Yajji came. Haman Yajji was directed by people saying that these people were very wealthy. They had goats and cows etc. So Haman Yajji started coming, killing people and taking their animals and everything they had away. He was selling people for one goat or sheep per person."

The way Mr. Ngatha gives his account on the cultural history of his people is typical for oral societies like the Dughwede. There is a mythological past, then a quite unclear middle part, only mentioned in one sentence stating that they were enjoying their guinea corn and traditional beer, and finally he mentions the most recent historical past, how they suffered from slave trade. Haman Yajji was the most terrible Fulani (called Plata by the Dughwede) slave trader of the area, based in Madagali (26 km south of Gwoza). He was captured and sentenced to death by the British only in 1927. Mr. Ngatha mentioned Haman Yajji because this was already oral history. Many old

people still remembered the times of Haman Yajji. However, slave trade had been going on for centuries, mainly conducted by the Mandara who were vassals of the Bornu Empire since the 16th century, but the Mandara had already given up slave trade at the beginning of this century, while Haman Yajji still carried on in the most dreadful way. Since the administrative boundary between Madagali in the south and Kerawa in the north went through the middle of the Dughwede mountains, one part of Dughwede suffered more. Another point to make here is that Mr. Ngatha has given the discovery of the guinea corn and fire as initial mythological points of reference for the development of food production in the mountains. That he connects this with the Dughwede appears only natural to him, but would presumably not stand archaeological examination. Mr. Ngatha, himself still a traditional, might have been influenced by biblical ideas by mentioning only one man and one woman at the beginning. However, the myth about the stones which were soft and the old women who urinated over them in order to spoil them as food, is a very common mythological topic also found among the Mafa. The same applies to the divine origin of the guinea corn and fire, brought by dog from heaven or God. The symbolic meaning of the traditional beer made from guinea corn to sacrifice to God and the ancestors is of great importance. It is the spiritual drink of the Dughwede, as it is for all montagnards, and its symbolic meaning in religious practices cannot be overestimated.

Mr Ngatha explains further that "there are seven different worlds underneath and seven different worlds above us. We are in the middle. In the world below they are living just as we are living here." Mr. Ngatha says that he does not really know whether the dead are in the world below, but he says that the people there are created as we are created here. He thinks that "we come from the world above and are born here and when we die we would go to the world below." Mr. Ngatha adds that everybody has a soul and if the soul is taken away we die. While the soul is still in us, we breathe. If the soul is taken away we become soil. This what the forefathers told them, Mr. Ngatha states.

As already mentioned, it is a common belief among traditional Dughwede that apart from the supreme God, every person also has his own personal god, but there is another god (*dzibuwa*) who is a thief. He hunts people but the personal gods take care of their people. However, the thief-god is always hunting for people, and if someone sees this god, who is perceived to only have one leg, this person will die. The supreme God who has a wife himself, directs the personal gods, who are considered as his children, to create people. So, for example, if the personal god of a person has three children, this person will have three children as well. If somebody's god has no children, that person will die without children. The supreme God sends his children for different tasks and purposes like a father does.

A person who dies without children will depend in the world beyond on others, because he has no child to make sacrifices for him in this world. Those who have children on earth get sacrifices from their children. If a child who was only breastfed dies, it will wait in the world beyond for his father to die.

A child who has passed the stage of being breastfed and dies will live in the world beyond on his own.

These beliefs demonstrate that the social and cosmological order of the Dughwede needs to be understood as a multifunctional comprehensive whole. We can say that the cosmological order mirrors the social order of the Dughwede. For traditional Dughwede this is the only way it can be since nobody has ever come back from the world beyond to say how it really is. So the religion practised by traditional Dughwede reflects their beliefs and therefore links the cosmological and the social order in a very specific way. For example, somebody's dead father will possibly appear in his son's dream to complain why he does not perform sacrifices like his forefathers did, since he lives there without anything. Others in the world beyond are profiting from their children and they are mocking him because he is not well looked after by his children on earth.

### The ancestors as the cardinal point of the family

To keep the world in order every man has three stones planted inside his compound. These stones are called *kwir thala* (*kwir* means stone and *thala* is the sacred area where also ancestral pots are kept). They are ancestral family shrines dug into the ground in front of the granaries. These stones count from right to left. The first is for somebody's father (*dada*), the second one for his grandfather (*jije*) and the third one is for his great grandfather (*wuje*). The father stone is for all people who live in this person's house and he as the father has to put a part of what ever he sacrifices on it. The grandfather and great grandfather stones are for an elder, he calls *dada* (father) and whom he invites from outside to do the sacrifices on his behalf. This can be any person as long as he belongs to the *skmama* of his father. Two sons of two brothers who have the same father are called *skmama*, but *skmama* are also all male from one and the same generation. If, for example, one generation does not have a person alive from the *skmama* of his father somebody can appoint any person who he thinks was a close friend to his father. This person he calls *dada* comes to do the ancestral stones for the grand father and the greatgrandfather for him. The line of sacrifices follows seniority as well as genealogical connection. The following diagram shows the basic pattern:



sky). The whole earth (*luwa*) is surrounded by mountains. On top of these mountains, like the roof of a house, we find *ghaluwa*. A very big snake is thought to be lying inside this cosmic mountain with its tail in its mouth. If the snake should drop its tail, the world would collapse. It is just like people living in a house. This is how we are in the world, Dughwede explain. Underneath *luwa*, we have *luwa mbarte*, the world beyond. Apart from below, the word *mbarte* also refers to anus. The word *luwa mbarte* also refers to the east, where the sun rises. The sun rises from there and enters back into the world beyond in the evening. While we have night in this world there is day light in the next.

In the social and physical reality of the Dughwede environment a compound family (*gwalghaya*) consists of father, his wife or wives and his children. As already mentioned, Dughwede cosmological thought claims that there are seven worlds above and seven underneath this world. In the Dughwede social order we find the number seven, too. It is the seventh son (*thaghaya*) who inherits the house and the fields nearby as well as a large number of trees. All other sons get less, but only the eldest son inherits the function of being the family eldest. If somebody has children founding their own compounds while the father is still alive, he gives them a piece of land, but stays with his seventh son in his own compound. The farmland somebody has built his farm on is called *vde*. This will be added on to the seventh son's share, when the father dies. If it means, for example, that every son gets two pieces of farmland, then the seventh son gets three since he also gets *vde*. In a case where the farmland cannot be evenly distributed, the first born and the seventh son will get more than all the other children.

## Landowner and inheritance

Land is privately owned but still considered as being only passed on through generations by the ancestors (*jijeha*). The name for farmland in general is *gwihe*. This includes also fallow land and bush. Farmland is not closed together in one plot, but fragmented. If, for example, somebody has only two sons and eight plots, then five will be for the second born who is now considered as the seventh born and three for the first born. If somebody has three sons, then three plots are for *thaghaya* and three for the first born, but only two for the middle one. With five plots and three sons, two go to *thaghaya*, two to the eldest and the second son gets only one piece. If someone has two wives and only one son from each wife, but five plots, then three plots go to the son of the first wife and two to the son of the second wife. Where the second wife has two sons, each of them will get one of these two plots. This indicates that the seventh born is always the son of the first wife. If she has only one son he will be automatically *thaghaya*, even in a case where the first wife has left and her son is in the care of the second wife. In case a woman has more than seven sons, it is always her eighth son who will never be *thaghaya*. In the past the eighth son was often killed.

Trees are also owned privately. The most important trees are *tsra* (*Kaya senegalensis*), *wurighe* (*Borassus aethiopum*) and *wa'iya* (*Anogneissus leiocarpus*). If someone has only one of these trees it is always *thaghaya* who inherits it.

The Dughwede distinguish between cultivated land (*kla pana*) and bushland (*susiye*). If someone has enough farmland he might give his bushland to a brother or friend to cultivate it. Selling farmland is possible as well and is called *sukdu gwihe* (*sukdu* means selling). In the old days farmland was only sold in exchange for domestic animals or farm products.

The area where people settle is called *hkudi luwa*. The word *hkudi* derives from the word *hkuäe* which means stomach. The word *siye* means that someone has his farmland outside the main settlement. *Hkudi luwa* includes the house fields or inner fields (*vde*) as well as additional farmland nearby. People also go to farm in the adjacent plains. Farmland in the plains is generally called *tghile*, which also means bush. In the past it was on these fields, where most slaves got captured. Therefore guards were posted on mountain tops to warn them and if slave raiders on horseback approached they blew a horn and people fled back into the mountains.

## The lineage and the settlement structure

As farmland is passed on through generations by the ancestors (*jijeha*), the ancestral cult is the precondition for owning land privately. Someone without such a connection is a stranger and was in the past either adopted, kept like a slave or sold into slavery. If the person was adopted he was incorporated into the ancestor cult. Dughwede local groups are lineage groups. A lineage contains all dead and living members of a unilinear descent group. The Dughwede like most montagnards trace their descent through their fathers line and when they marry, the couple will have its compound on land given by the husband's father. The organisational structure of such groups derives from the family model. The sons of the different wives of a man form as full brothers the possible nucleus of a future lineage. This is how local groups initially develop. Dughwede call this connection *kudage* meaning kitchen. If, for example, a group of people moved away from where they were previously settled, they start forming new *kudage* at their new settlement. After they have developed several *kudige* they are *kambarte*, meaning a local settlement group or lineage section. Since they might not be far away from their old *kambarte*, they still trace their genealogical origin back to the local settlement group they derived from. This connection is called *ksake*. *Ksake* refers more to the genealogical connection and *kambarte* to geographical segmentation of lineages. A third important term is *zbe*. *Zbe* defines the marriage options of a person. It means that the children of somebody's daughter are *zbe* up to the fourth generation of his *ksage* and therefore cannot marry each other. Only after all children of the daughter who intermarried in the first place have died, can somebody marry one of her grand children.

To get married is the initial step for a man in forming his own compound and to finally get his ancestral stones installed. However, a man cannot marry whomever he wishes but has to look at the lineage connection of the family he is going to build an in-law relationship with. This is normally done by his father and the relationship is very often carefully planned in advance. The dowry was traditionally paid in goats and cows. Therefore, the exchange of domestic animals took place alongside *zbe*. This means animal rearing was traditionally very much governed by the four generation rule of exogamous grouping between families of the same agnatic descent. The circulation of domestic animals was therefore largely controlled by the traditional social order.

The settlement pattern in general and its development was presumably controlled by the social structure as well as the agricultural technique of the Dughwede. Since the population has increased, especially over the last one or two centuries, because of the danger of slave raids, single settlement units possibly moved closer and closer to each other. Apart from war, only a quite rigid regime of ritual control over land enabled groups to avoid permanent conflicts. Therefore every traditional settlement unit has its own sacred sites where the sacrifices are performed in order to maintain their corporate rights.

These places are called *ghalala* and are of enormous religious and local historical importance. Many taboos are attached to these places, spirits are believed to live there, and in the past, people did not go there except for ritual purposes. These places are the equivalence of the ancestral stones of the compounds, but in a much more wider sense of lineage descent and local group development. They indicate settlement rights and structure the Dughwede society geographically into settlement units and subunits typical of segmentary societies. The dynamics of group and settlement unity is symbolically bound to these places and ritually contained and expressed as starting and ending points of important seasonal activities like planting or harvesting. They provide evidence for the ethical reality of the social and cosmological order of the Dughwede. Here again we find the principle of the seventh born (*thaghaya*), now holding ritual power as well. In this context it is not on the family level but on the lineage level. It is the family of the descendants of the seventh born of the possible eldest ancestor, who himself was *thaghaya*, who is responsible for leading important ceremonial events throughout the seasons.

The Dughwede land stretches across the top of a high massif mountain area. It consists of valleys on different levels with only soft or very steep terraced slopes and rocky summits, covering, towards the plains, a huge, sharp descending granite block and other hard rocks which have resisted erosion. The settlements are always found on the slopes or other places where the soil does not get too wet, but hardly ever in the valleys. They shape smaller or larger hamlets lying nearby each other with lots of trees to supply material for roof making and firewood. There are also many slopes or valleys without any settlements at all, but only terraces for farming. It has already been mentioned that the Dughwede distinguish between the cultivated land (*kla pana*) within the settlement and nearby on one side and farmland far away from the settlement on the other. The whole of Dughwede land is divided into several major traditional settlement units, whereby the two most important ones are Vaghagaya in the south and Ghwa'a in the north. All Dughwede trace themselves back to Dughwede Mbra who was the founding ancestor of all Dughwede. Dughwede had four sons: Wasa, Ngara, Kwiya and Tasa, but most Dughwede trace their ancestry only back to Ngara. Ngara had two sons: Thakara and Ruwa. All descendants of Thakara live nowadays in Ghwa'a, while the majority of the descendants of Ruwa live in Vaghagaya. Since Thakara and Ruwa had many descendants, we now find numerous lineages tracing their ancestry back to them, forming their own traditional settlement units. The three other sons of Dughwede, Wasa, Kwiya and Tasa and the lineages developing out of them are not so numerous and therefore do not form so many settlement units. However, in terms of population increase two of these three less successful major lineages have important ritual duties to fulfil. The descendants of Wasa are diviners and healers while the descendants of Tasa are rainmakers and grain blessers.

These three lineages might not have been really of Dughwede descent, but still trace their ancestry back to Dughwede which is fully accepted by all Dughwede. The Dughwede numbers altogether 13 traditional settlement units. These are:

- 1 Takweshe
- 2 Korana Basa
- 3 Korana Kwandame
- 4 Hudimcha
- 5 Gharaza
- 6 Kwalika
- 7 Gudule
- 8 Taghadigile
- 9 Ghwa'a
- 10 Kunde
- 11 Hembe
- 12 Tatsa
- 13 Gathagure

Administratively, they are divided into two villages, Korana Basa, containing the listed traditional units from 1 to 7, and Ghwa'a, consisting of the units 8 to 13. The division between settlement and non settlement farmland throughout the traditional settlement units is not entirely clear cut, since some units have closer lineage bonds than others. For example, Korana Basa and Korana Kwandama both descended from a common ancestor, Korana. They are neighbours and their settlement area is closely bound together in the north of their common land while the outer fields for both lie next to each other in the south. However, as a general rule we can say that inner fields and outer fields are found within a traditional settlement unit. Nevertheless, since the unit boundaries follow the shape of the natural landscape and the dwellings are found mainly along the slopes but never in the valleys, the farmland which does not carry dwellings appears to be quite extended. For example, if a river cuts a valley, the river might well be the traditional boundary, but the whole valley might exist of outer fields only.

### The seasonality of farming activities

The Dughwede, like most montagnards, practice crop rotation. This means they plant alternatively guinea corn (*Sorghum caudatum*) and finger millet (*Eleusine coracana*) one year and millet (*Pennisetum typhoidum*) and beans the other. The reason they give is that it helps to keep the land fertile, since lack of land and high population density does not allow shifting cultivation to

the same extent as would be possible in the plains. The Dughwede believe that millet and beans do not need so much fertility as does guinea corn. In particular, the fields next to their compounds which are used over and over again receive special care, while the fields a bit further away can be left to recover or for cutting grasses to feed their domestic animals. Every dry season the animal manure is brought out to the fields nearby to add fertility to the soil. The terraces are built in such a way that fertility is contained within. Since they are declined slightly backwards it means that water cannot wash out the soil so easily. For the Dughwede, the type of soils are not as important as the care taken of them. Any type of soil, they say, can be kept fertile as long as the owner of the land looks after it in an appropriate way. This attitude towards their land is typical, not only for the Dughwede, but for most montagnards in the geographical Sudan.

The traditional year of the Dughwede starts when the first rain is enough for planting. Since they count the moons, the year begins to be counted from the first moon reappearing during the month when the planting started. Since the ripening period of the millet is shorter, the millet year starts later than the guinea corn year. This leads to the situation where the guinea corn year is considered to be up to one month longer than the millet year. Altogether, only the time from planting to harvesting is considered as the real traditional year. Therefore the traditional year lasts only 7 to 8 months, 1 or 2 months of it, towards the end, reaching into the dry season. The first 6 months are the main part of the traditional year covering the whole rainy season.

That the time from planting to harvesting is considered as the real traditional year does not mean that there is no awareness of the fact that it takes up to 12 months from one planting to the next planting season. However, we have to consider that, in the millet year, it is generally 11 months and, in the corn year, 13 months. These months are taken from the dry season or are added to the dry season.

The fact that the rainy season is given more importance in terms of structuring the year has more to do with how the Dughwede see themselves interacting with their environment. The rainy season is the main season to interact actively and productively with the environment and is therefore seen as the actual traditional year. This explains why 1 to 2 months for harvesting are taken from the dry season to add to the traditional year.

The Dughwede call the rainy season *viye* and the dry season *kalyagha*. The 7 to 8 months of the productive part of the year are divided into three sub-parts again:

- 1     *kath gwihe*
- 2     *takar viye*  
      - *wusa*  
      - *khurta*
- 3     *tefighe*

*Kath gwihe* means to acquire land in the sense of deciding which land is going to be used, including planting seeds, that is, sewing of land. It means activating land. *Takar viye* refers to the middle of the rainy season and it comprises the time of hoeing and transplanting. *Tefighe* finally refers to the ripening and harvesting period, leading already into the dry season, which I call the passive time of the year. The middle of the rainy season (*takar viye*) can be divided into *wusa* (first hoeing) and *khurta* (second hoeing).

## The ritual celebrations during the traditional year

### The activity of the rainmaker

During the active part of the year the rainmakers and the grain blessers of the Dughwede are very busy. The Dughwede have one particular lineage called Gaske (Ske was a son of Tasa, already mentioned) who are the rainmakers. Since the Dughwede are a very egalitarian society, the Gaske rainmakers do not hold any additional political power. It is believed that they regulate the rainfall as well as the wind. Especially during the rainy season the rainmakers appear very confident and their behaviour towards other individuals can be quite rude. Everybody is afraid of them, fearing it could not rain enough or heavy winds could destroy the crops. During the dry season the rainmakers ease a lot and behave like everybody else.

I talked to several rainmakers and I found out that they see themselves much more as rainpriests rather than as rainmakers. It is a gift to make rain and this gift is given to them by God, they claim. However, their knowledge about the nature of rain is scientifically sound. Rain does not fall from heaven just like that, but it is humidity which evaporates from the ground up to a certain height building clouds and finally it rains. Especially when it is hot, water evaporates upwards. After it has formed clouds, the clouds then move eastward and when they come back it rains. During the planting period not much rain is needed, but after the first hoeing is necessary so that transplanting of millet and guinea corn can take place. I do not mention here all the other plants Dughwede cultivate since many of them do not carry particular symbolic meaning, but generally spoken most plants nowadays cultivated in the plains are also cultivated in the mountains. During the second hoeing even more rain is necessary and towards the ripening period there should still be just enough rain. Afterwards the rain should reduce gradually towards harvesting.

An important function for a rain maker is the observation of the movement of the sun in onnection with certain landmarks. If the sun moves to a certain landmark, it usually rains. In general, it rains more heavily on the hills than in the plains, the rainmakers believe.

Apart from rainmaking, certain other religious activities are performed, like binding the wind, stopping insects by applying certain medical mixtures and

increasing yield and blessing grain by certain medical applications during the rainy season. The brother lineage of Gaske called Gazhiwe, a descendant of Gudule (another son of Tasa) is a particular specialist for grain blessing. Here we find the division between the earth bound and the atmospheric forces symbolically divided into two, performed by two brothers descending from the same lineage ancestor. We will learn later how this split took place and how it interlinks on the mythological level with the cosmological thinking of the Dughwede. At this point, I simply want to mention it and add that the duty of grain blessing is closely related to the celebrating of the bull festival which is also in the hands of the lineage of the grain blessers. It will be explained later in full when we come to the time of the traditional calendar devoted to celebrating the religious festivals which generally take place during the dry season.

If we want to explain these activities, we need to understand that, especially during the labour intensive time of the year, communication with God, who is believed to finally be in charge of everything happening on earth, needs to be maintained through specially developed cultural institutions. This is a kind of communication and not magic. From this point of view, especially, the rain makers appear to be the personification of this communication. When I saw them angrily storming around, gesticulating wildly, almost being physically out of control, they appeared to me like rain, wind and lightning bearing thunder gods socially dramatising the active part of the seasons.

During the busy time of the year, traditional religious life is rather passive. The active time of the year when everybody is busy farming and watching out for rain is not the usual time to celebrate festivals. The religious life begins between harvesting and threshing. It structures the dry season into a set of religious activities which, step by step, involve greater parts of the local community.

Towards the end of the active part of the year stored food becomes short and there would be little to feast with anyway. Before we focus on the field of religious activities, it is necessary to discuss the function of animal rearing, since domestic animals are the most important religious sacrifices. They are not only important as religious sacrifices to God and the ancestors, but also the most important protein supply. In the past they were also the most important source of manure to keep the settlement fields fertile.

As soon as the small plants start germinating at the beginning of the traditional year, all animals are kept closed up inside the domestic area. In addition to farming the crops, grass needs to be cut from the bushlands and carried home throughout the active part of the year. Goats, sheep and cattle need to be fed and since the grass is seldom found nearby, men and boys have to go quite far every day to get it. In the past a bull was kept by many families. This bull was permanently kept in a stable in order to be fattened and finally sacrificed by involving the whole community in a sequence of ceremonies during the guinea corn year.

There are differences between the guinea corn and millet year regarding religious celebrations. The guinea corn year, compared with the millet year is religiously more significant. This is also indicated by the divine origin of guinea corn and the fact that the traditional beer for religious purposes is always made from it. Already during the ripening period the guinea corn requires special attention by the Gaske rainmakers and the Gazhiwa grain blessers. They come to attach a special kind of euphorbia (*vavanza*) to the bottom part of the cornstock to increase the yield. This kind of treatment can be continued even after the harvest when the grain blessers are still expected to be called in to treat the guinea corn which has already been harvested and put in a special storehouse before threshing. However, the guinea corn with the euphorbia attached to the cornstock in the fields will be harvested only at the last moment.

It is the senior rainmaker of the Gaske lineage who will start the harvest for all Dughwede. He is considered as *thaghaya* (seventh born) for all Gaske. After him the most important *thaghaya* of the major lineages from Ghwa'a (Thakara descent) and Vaghagaya (Ruwe Mughuze descent) will take over and everybody else follows as he feels. For the planting of guinea corn, however, the senior Gaske rainmaker has a very important function. He puts the first seed in the ground already weeks before the first rain is going to fall to communicate the need for the rain to fall early. After the ritual planting the farm yard manure is distributed to the inner fields. This shows the strong symbolic meaning of planting, fertilizing and harvesting in order to socially dramatise the traditional year by interacting with the seasons.

### The slaughtering period

Before somebody can harvest his crops he needs to do *tswila*. This ritual involves a he-goat being slaughtered and the contents of the stomach and/or the gut of this goat are thrown onto the crops. The meat of the goat is shared and eaten. Everybody who has goats is supposed to do this. After that *tikwa kupe* needs to be done. This is only done in a guinea corn year and only by family elders. They grind guinea corn from the last year and add some fresh guinea corn and grind it as well. They put both together into water and pour it over the three ancestral stones in front of their granaries. After pouring the cornflour water over the stones the family elder drinks first and then will give it to the other family members to drink. This ritual needs to be conducted before a male elder can consume the new guinea corn. Normally the harvest starts after this ritual.

Guinea corn and millet are harvested in a different manner. While guinea corn is cut at its lower end, millet is cut at its upper end. Guinea corn is bundled in the field to dry a bit and then cut on its upper end. The stocks already bundled are kept in the field and the fruit heads are carried home, while millet stocks are cut later. Guinea corn is stored in a special store house, and millet on top of a sun roof type of drying place. While millet is threshed

without any rituals, guinea corn needs the sacrifice *har gwazgafte*, meaning slaughtering for God. A ram or a he-goat is slaughtered and the contents of the gut are thrown on to the store house where guinea corn is kept. The contents of the stomach is kept on top of the guinea corn store. The meat gets shared and consumed. After this ritual the guinea corn can be threshed and put into the granary. After the harvest the domestic animals are released, except the bull for the bull festival. No more grass cutting is necessary but hay making takes place to get them through the dry season.

After threshing *har ghwe* is conducted, followed by *har jije* and *har khagwa*. *Har* means slaughtering which refers to an increase of meat consumption controlled by ritual means. The sacrificial slaughtering of mainly goats also has the religious function of keeping in touch with God and the ancestors, and gracing the occasion by praising as well as asking for health and fertility. By doing that, local lineage group settings are confirmed and land rights are maintained. Although the ritual slaughtering, mainly of goats, can be seen as a means to control the goat population, the main purpose is to communicate the dependency upon them as being essential for maintaining the farming of crops in an agriculturally confined mountainous environment. Animal rearing is not only important for protein intake, but also to produce manure to keep the terrace fields fertile, a fact which cannot be stressed enough. The highly symbolic meaning of the gut during the ritual performances demonstrates this connection, since its contents are the transformed grasses and hay previously fed to the animals which now finally gets distributed again as farm yard manure.

In the past, before the introduction of chemical fertilizer, animal manure was much more important than today. A man who wanted to take care of his fields but did not have enough domestic animals went to ask those who had goats if he could look after them on their behalf. As compensation he got only the manure. The men who had these goats on lease were not allowed to sacrifice any of them. Instead there is a special way to do the obligatory *har ghwe*, *har jije* and *har khagwa*, called *duf dala*. This is normally done after the three slaughtering ceremonies have been performed. The ceremony *duf dala* only entails sacrificing prepared guinea corn given to the ancestral stones and other sacred places in and around the compound before it gets shared and eaten communally.

Together with sacrificial meat and guinea corn, beer brewed from guinea corn is given. Traditional beer (*ghuze*) epitomises the transformation of the divine guinea corn as basic food stuff into an alcoholic drink for ritual purposes. Everybody loves it and the consumption of guinea corn as beer was much more controlled in the past by ritual means and religious beliefs than it is now. This prevented people from consuming too much guinea corn in the form of beer which could have easily led to a risk of hunger at the end of the active part of the year.

After the meat and beer consuming phase at the beginning of the dry season, the bull festival (*har daghile*), performed only during the guinea corn

year, closes the ritual cycle of the Dughwede main festival period. Nowadays, there are no more bull festivals performed since market economy brings a value system symbolized by money as the general equivalent. A bull can be sold at the market instead of being kept for years in a stable, whereas, in the past, having a bull to sacrifice meant really being a successful member of the traditional society.

It was the grain blesser from the lineage Gazhiwe, who was in charge of the ceremonial part of the bull festival. This shows the close, symbolical relationship between the bull, who was kept in seclusion during the millet year, and the cultivating of guinea corn.

### The bull festival

The bull festival is the most significant festival in the whole of the northern Mandara Mountains. Among the Mafa, who live in a politically more stratified society, the bull is symbolically attached to the traditional village chief. This is a political institution we do not find in Dughwede land. However, in both societies the seclusion and disclosure of the bull is the essential part of their bull ceremony. This has to be seen with regard to the fact that livestock is essential for successful terrace farming. Bringing the manure out, mainly to the house fields and the fields nearby, in connection with a specific social structure, leads to a certain settlement pattern. It divides the cultivated land into settlement and non-settlement areas wherein the settlement areas are the fertile areas, which the Dughwede also call *hkudi luwa*, meaning stomach of the earth, as we have heard above. However, this is not all. There is the cosmological background as well and it is important to recognise this if we want to understand how the Dughwede interact with their natural environment in the way they do. In this context I want to refer to ritual performances we tend to call magic, but which I prefer to call religious since I see it as an exercise in communicating with the natural forces on a spiritual level rather than as an attempt to control them by magic means. Since the Dughwede do not distinguish between natural and spiritual forces in the same way as we tend to do, spiritual forces are seen as part of nature and therefore easily appear to us as superstitious or magic. For Dughwede they exist within the natural environment as they exist in man as we have seen at the beginning where I developed the model of the possible psychological structure of the individual person.

The ritual disclosure of the bull can therefore be interpreted as dramatising these forces. Domestic animals are eaten by man and then produce farmyard manure from what they themselves have previously eaten. They are closely related to man who feeds them, but they are only beneficial as long as they are kept away from the fields during the rainy season. This cycle symbolically reflects the cultural interaction with the natural environment. For Dughwede, as is presumably the case for all humans, it is not possible to interact with the natural environment without any intentional ideological background. We have

already seen, that energy exchange does not only take place in this world, but is also believed to happen between this world and the world beyond. Domestic animals are sacrificed to the ancestors and to God. The natural environment has not only a physical but also a spiritual dimension. The Dughwede cultural performances can therefore be seen as "offspring of both nature and culture" (TURNER 1984:20). To interpret the bull festival of the Dughwede as an attempt to dramatise their environmental relationship in the context of their own culture can assist in attaching meaning to the function of the Dughwede calendar in regulating their seasonal interactions.

The core of the bull festival is the ritual disclosure of the bull from its stable. The point to begin with is the mythological background as to why the Gazhiwe lineage holds the main responsibility for this. Tasa, the ancestor of the Zhiwe and the Ske lineage was responsible for both the grain blessing as well as rainmaking. He had a very nice cow with a white tail. Gudule, the father of Zhiwe had a girl friend who asked him to get a white tail of a cow for traditional dancing. Gudule went and cut the white tail off his father's cow. He gave it to his girlfriend. When the father saw the tail missing from his nice cow, he called on his sons who were Ske and Gudule. He said: "I saw that the white tail of the cow has been cut off. Who ever did that must not be afraid to tell me. He will be the best son for me, and I will give a special gift to him." Gudule admitted that he was the one who had cut the white tail off the nice cow. The father now said to him: "If you did that, you won't make rain. You will have the *vavanza* (euphorbia) to increase the yield of our farm products. You will also be the first person to start the bull festival as well as roofing the house and other traditional tasks or sacrifices".

This legend does not say that Gazhiwe shall be responsible for the ritual disclosure of the bull, but only that he is the one who shall start the bull festival. Without wanting to go into local traditions it is a fact that the bull festival did start in the settlement unit called Gudule. The Gudule were the ones to open the cycle of the festival, travelling through all of Dughwede traditional subunits. After the Gudule had performed their bull festival, members of the Zhiwe lineage went to the other settlement units to celebrate the disclosure of the bull.

Before the actual bull festival takes place, the houses get roofed with the guinea corn stocks from the last guinea corn year. A long stick called *tsaga* with bifurcating branches on top gets cut from the *shiwa* tree (scientific name not identified). This stick, about four or five metres long, was cut days before and erected between the granaries reaching through the flat roof of the foyer of the house. On top of this roof a tent like umbrella made out of grass is attached around the *tsaga*. Now guinea corn is put into water to germinate it for the brewing of traditional beer. The announcement of putting the guinea corn into the water in Gudule is the beginning of the period of the bull festival in whole of Dughwede, although the actual ritual of releasing and sacrificing the bull takes place in regional sequences.

Before the bull was released a diviner (*dagha*) was called to diagnose whether there was anything wrong with the bull. I already mentioned the diviner lineage, Dagha, a son of Wasa, as the third specialist lineage of the Dughwede. If the bull was so fierce that he might have fought people, Gazhiwe would use some euphorbia to calm him down. When it was time to release the bull a Gazhiwe would perform *paghyewe*, meaning "pouring it away with water". During that performance people would blow horns and play flutes and women produced guttural sounds called *yaka*. For *paghyewe* a certain variety of euphorbia (*mandatha*) was cut into water. The water was poured over the bulls feeding place in the stable. This was done three times. Now the stable was cut open towards the external side of the compound and the bull came out. The bull would run and the most courageous young man would have tried to catch him. After this was achieved they tied him on a tree with a special rope called *matatala*. A drum was taken and beaten on top of the bull's back. The wives of the owner would come to hold their calabashes over the bull's hump, while the husband and owner of the bull would sing and dance together with his people. The bull was then taken back into the compound near the long stick (*tsaga*). With his back in the stable and his front toward the granary the bull was now held with sticks between the door and after the loose skin covering his throat was cut away he was ritually stabbed to death straight into his throat. The blood was collected into pots and after the slaughtering was finished the meat was hung underneath the stick on top of the flat roof next to the opening of the granaries. The bull had been kept in seclusion and fattened inside the compound of his owner for almost two years and only released to be sacrificed on the same day.

The bull festival is only performed after a guinea corn year. His ritual disclosure is performed by the grain blesser lineage of the Dughwede who also have the right to start off the festival cycle for all Dughwede. The legend reported above explains how the responsibility for grain blessing and leading the bull festival became attached to the Gazhiwe lineage while rainmaking was kept with their closest relatives, the Gaske. Without overstressing the possible meaning of this mythological split of the two functions, I think it is legitimate to try to interpret it as an attempt to assume two basic natural forces. First are the atmospheric forces of *vale*, like rain, wind, thunder and lightening and the second one, the forces of *luwa*, the earth, the soil, fertility etc. To keep in touch with these forces, to communicate them by dramatising, is essential for terrace farmers like the Dughwede. The bull festival is only the most significant example. There are other performances as well and their timing is controlled by the traditional calendar of the Dughwede.

### The calendar of the Dughwede

After the bull festival, the ritual cycle which started with harvesting and threshing. Time has passed on to the middle of the dry season. Shortly after the bull festival the preparation for planting starts. About one month before the

rainy season the previously mentioned ritual planting of first seeds takes place. During the ritual planting some weeds are ritually pulled out and thrown away in a particular valley. People start manuring the fields. The manure is always distributed to the fields they farmed and not the ones they did not use in a particular year. People are convinced that the fields they left fallow, even sometimes for several years, regain fertility by themselves. Now they clear the new ones they wish to plant during the coming year and the ones they want to farm again, especially those near the compound. The terraces are prepared and some hoeing is done before there is enough rain for planting the seeds so that the seasonal year can start.

Since the bull festival took place after a guinea corn year, the next year to come is a millet year. The rain will start falling in the 8th month of the dry season. This happened exactly in 1995, apart from the fact that there is no more bull festival. This means when there was enough rain, planting started, as was the case in June 1995. Even if they had started planting at the end of the traditional month, they would still call this the first month of the year. The traditional month starts with the 3rd or 4th traditional moon.

The Dughwede distinguish between seven phases of the moon:

- 1 *mca ce tile* (dying moon)
- 2 *khuäi gurthe* (middle of dark)
- 3 *äagha gawli'e* (the Gaäagha <diviner lineage> can see the moon)
- 4 *pithace tile* (everybody can see the moon)
- 5 *til maääakwa* (shining moon, meaning waxing moon)
- 6 *taka ghar ce tile* (the middle of the moon meaning full moon)
- 7 *gurth ce tile* (increasing dark towards dying moon)

The Dughwede have no names for the particular months of the traditional year. They only count from the 1st month of planting up to the 6th month for the rainy and 6th month for the dry season. The general name for month is *tile*, which means moon.

In the millet year, they plant the millet first, while in the corn year, finger millet (*rota*) is planted, only by women, before the guinea corn. After the millet reaches about 20 cms, they plant beans. Unlike the guinea corn, the new millet can be harvested, threshed as well as consumed without any special ceremonial sacrifice, but the harvest still starts with the eldest rainmaker. Another important difference between the guinea corn and the millet year is that during the ripening period of the guinea corn year, a certain flute (*filaka*), made out of animal horn, is played. This is not done during the millet year. The millet stock is left in the fields, whereas that of the guinea corn is carried home for traditional roofing. The millet corn stock is then pulled out later during the dry season. The stocks and roots are left together and gathered in small heaps covered with sand to go rotten during the coming rainy season on

fields which are not being used this year. These little mounts (*dalaha*) are also placed on the edges of terraces to monitor erosion.

Although the bull festival does not take place during the millet year, all the other ancestral celebrations are performed during the millet year. The three most important ones called *har ghwe*, *har jije* and *har khagwa*. *Har ghwe* takes place in the 3rd month of the dry season, meaning the 9th traditional month altogether, after threshing and after the millet has been put into the granary. Guinea corn beer (*ghuze*) is prepared and put into several pots called *tughthe*. The father of the family goes around to invite people to share food, meat and beer. The contents of the gut and the stomach of the sacrificed he-goat are put on the three ancestral stones and the remains of these contents are put into a broken pot and placed underneath the husband's granary. They keep the ribs and the chest of the goat with the flesh still on, to perform the next ceremony called *har jije*. *Har jije* is done for the deceased grandfather while *har ghwe* (*ghwe* means goat) is conducted for the deceased father. For *har jije* another goat is slaughtered. They do the same rituals with the contents of the gut and stomach, share food, meat and beer, but keep the same part of the slaughtered animal, the ribs and the chest. The next ritual is now *har khagwa*, meaning the closing ritual. The kept parts of the he-goats from *har ghwe* and *har jije* are now prepared together and the meat gets shared communally.

In the old days, there was no eating of meat without a ceremonial or ritual context, unless an animal had died. In the past, if a cow or bull died, they gave that meat to neighbours in exchange for guinea corn, millet or beans. Dughwede say that there used to be more animals in the past in the mountain than there are today. Everybody reared animals. The only problem they had in those days was the death of animals. Epidemics could sometimes wipe out all the animals of a household and this used to happen quite often. If something like that happened during *har ghwe* they would only get one he-goat for the lineage eldest to sacrifice and celebrate on behalf of the whole group. In the past they reared mainly cattle, goats, sheep and chickens. Only the most important ritual occasions when animals were sacrificed, have been mentioned, but there are others, for example, at funerals or in case of illness or bad luck when there was always some meat to consume. Therefore, it was not only in the dry season that meat was consumed, but since all obligatory religious festivals happen after the harvest during the first two or three months of the dry season much meat was consumed during that time. Comparing the guinea corn and the millet year, it becomes obvious that after the harvest there are not so many occasions to feast in the millet year as in the guinea corn year. It is very much the guinea corn year which is the more important year of the Dughwede calendar.

Normally the roofs are not covered in a millet year, but many other tasks are to be done before the beginning of the new year. Houses need to be repaired, animals to be tended to, and since it is much more difficult to get hold of water the daily walk to find water takes longer and longer. Another important task in the past was the forging of iron tools. Iron hoes, sickles,

knives and axes are very important tools which were produced locally. The iron sand (magnetite) was collected during the rainy season but it was smelted in furnaces during the dry season and after that blacksmithed into tools. The Dughwede had a very developed technique for smelting iron, but differ from the Mafa in that they do not have endogamous smith groups. However, a certain division of labour had developed. While the smelting of iron in furnaces was done by groups of neighbours, the smithing of it into different agricultural tools was done by specialists called *gwal vda* (*gwal* means kinfolk and *vda* means forging). To smelt the iron, trees were cut and charcoal was produced. Iron was also produced and forged into bars (*dutsa*) to be sold in the plains (9 *dutsa* was one cow). If somebody did that and he did not have enough trees to produce the charcoal, he asked his neighbour to exchange by offering as compensation an iron bar or an iron tool.

The terraces had to be repaired during the second part of the dry season. The Dughwede distinguish between several types of terraces. Dughwede say that they found the terraces already when they arrived, but they needed to maintain them. They also built new terraces. They are built to avoid water erosion and to gain farm land. To control the water flow stops the water spoiling the farmland. The general word for terraces is *ghardha*. Very high terraces are called *sawa* while small terraces on rocky places where only little soil is found are called *dugh itha*. To repair them is not an easy task and needs quite good knowledge about the way the water can damage them during the rainy season.

During the end of the dry season the lack of water and the heat becomes quite unbearable. Both people and animals suffer. There is not much more to be done than wait for the first rain to fall and for the senior rain priest to put the first grain of guinea corn or millet into the ground hoping the earthly and atmospheric forces are going to let it germinate, with the help of farm yard manure, of course!

Let me summarize at the end by presenting the Dughwede calendar in its chronological seasonal order. On the left we find all the performances which take place only in the guinea corn year and on the right the ones which only take place during the millet year. In the middle we find all activities which take place in both seasonal years.

Only guinea corn year	Both years	Only millet year
Finger millet	First rain	
Guinea corn	Tying animals	
	Cutting grass	Millet
	1. hoeing ( <i>wusa</i> )	Beans
	2. hoeing ( <i>khurta</i> )	
	Ritual crop treatment	
	Rain making	
	Ripening period	
Playing flute	Crop blessing	
	Making hay	
Ritual ( <i>tikwa kupe</i> )	Harvesting	
	Ritual ( <i>tswila</i> )	
	Releasing animals	
Ritual ( <i>har gwazgafte</i> )	Threshing	
	Ritual slaughtering:	
	- <i>har ghwe</i>	
	- <i>har jije</i>	
	- <i>har khagwa</i>	
Roofing houses		
Bull festival		
	Forging	
	Clearing fields	
	Ritual planting	
	Fertilizing	

Fig. 2: The calendar of the Dughwede

If we blend these activities into our calendar, by showing how the traditional months could possibly overlap the modern Christian months, we receive the following picture:

Season ( <i>kalyagha</i> )			Rainy Season ( <i>viye</i> )								Dry
Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
				Guinea corn year ( <i>vaghiya</i> )							
				1. M	2. M	3. M	4. M	5. M	6. M	7. M	8. M
				Millet year ( <i>vagwira</i> )							
				1. M	2. M	3. M	4. M	5. M	6. M	7. M	
Slaughtering period				<i>Kathgwihe</i> (getting land ready/planting)							
Roofing				<i>Takar viye</i> (hoeing/transplanting)							
				<i>Tefighe</i> (harvesting + threshing)							
				Ritual planting and fertilizing							
				Bull festival							

Fig. 3: The blending of the traditional and modern calendar

## Summary

We can conclude that the Dughwede calendar lasts for two seasonal years, marked by the bull festival as a culminating and turning point. All ritual and agricultural activities are interlinked and need to be seen comprehensively together with the social and cosmological order to understand the underlying cultural pattern. The year is dramatized throughout the seasons to keep the communication between the natural and spiritual forces, both creatively reflected in the individual person. The traditional world was kept in balance as a functional equilibrium over a period of time not known to us, but is now moving towards a process of transformation initiated by structural historical change. The first step towards change is the change of moral values which affects possibly first individuals and then groups. This encourages them to give up the traditional way of interacting with their environment. This process can be described as secularisation and leads to another quality of relationship between man and his natural environment. The same process can also be described as socio-economic change.

Some basic changes have already taken place, as we see, for example, that the bull festival is no longer conducted. It ceases to mark the symbolic turning point of the traditional calendar. Other changes take place in giving up the ritual consumption of meat during the traditional slaughtering period. Meat can be bought at the market. Finally farm yard manure is mainly replaced by chemical fertilizer. These are only a few examples of how traditional life receives new impulses which finally lead to historical change and to a more modern lifestyle. Other environmental, more scientific values need possibly to be invented to maintain the ecological function of the terrace farming system not only for the people in the mountains, but also to protect local resources within this vulnerable sudanic environment.