Résumé

P. K. Eguchi — Le pastoralisme dans les contes.

La plupart des Fulɓe du Nord Cameroun et du Togo sont des agro-pasteurs sédentaires. Cependant, le pastoralisme constitue l'une des composantes essentielles de la « fulanité ». Cet article traite de la représentation du pastoralisme dans les contes. Le mode de vie étant centré autour du gardiennage du bétail, l'auteur analyse en premier lieu ses caractéristiques dans le milieu de la savane. En raison du plurilinguisme qui prévaut en Afrique de l'Ouest, les contes transcendent, en longue période, les frontières ethniques. Ce phénomène engendre une homogénéité et une similarité entre les différents contes de l'Afrique de l'Ouest et, à cet égard, les récits fulɓe ne constituent pas une exception. Nombre de récits appartiennent au même type que ceux d'autres ethnies mais, à cause du thème du pastoralisme, certains sont totalement originaux et contiennent des expressions concernant le bétail et des détails sur la culture pastorale, en particulier la traite et le pâturage. Le bétail y est décrit comme richesse et comme un facteur d'abondance, témoignant ainsi de la relation profonde qui unit les Fulɓe à leur troupeau.

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The purpose of this paper is to examine how pastoralism is reflected in the folktales of the Fulbe of Northern Cameroon and Northern Togo. The majority of Fulbe in both regions are sedentary semi-pastoralists. The tales used in the present study were collected at random in Northern Cameroon and Northern Togo. They are called taalol / taali in Cameroon, and tarnool / tarnaaji in Togo. They are told at night, mainly for children.¹

The style of folktales is very simple. They are only slightly more elaborated than riddles. On most occasions they are told by amateurs, and the language is not sophisticated. The unconscious nature of folktales, however, can make interpretation difficult. The description is rough, and sometimes ambiguous. The message carried by folktales is difficult to catch. The folktales show very deep feelings of human beings. It is interesting to see how pastoralism is reflected in the depth of Fulbe psychology.

Folktales travel from one ethnic group to another very quickly. As a result of such transmission and interaction over a long period of time, all the tales of West Africa show great similarity and homogeneity. The Fulbe folktales are not exceptional; they are Fulbe stories simply because they are told or sung in Fulfulde. In other words, if told in other languages, they would still belong to the same tale-type.

Nevertheless, the Fulbe are one of the few peoples in West Africa who still practice pastoralism; or, more accurately, who still place great value on pastoralism, even though after sedentarization they cannot maintain a lifestyle that depends entirely on pastoralism.

My greatest concern is whether there is any difference between the folktales told by agriculturalists and those told by Fulbe. The Fulbe ethnicity, called pulaaku, consists of many components. In this article I would like to concentrate on “pastoralism” as one of the most important of these components, and examine the present data from the standpoint of this key word.

Pastoralism here refers to the lifestyle that centers around keeping cattle. The place where it occurs is the West-African savanna. This lifestyle is concerned with objects in nature, such as the bush, the sky, the sun, wind, rain, pasture, water, ant-hills, and so forth. Also central to it are the activities and events related to cattle—milking, branding, childbirth, and castration. Human factors, including walking long distances, migration, transhumance, patience, etc., are also part of it. Through pastoralism the Fulbe created their own world-view and value system.


Savanna: The Setting of Pastoralism

The Fulbe live in the savanna. Villages where human beings live are called gure, and the bush where non-human beings live and pastoralists herd their cattle, is called ladde. In the savanna there are animals such as lions, hyenas, hares, bush-cows, antelopes, and elephants; birds, such as vultures, crested cranes, and guinea fowl; and plants, including baobabs, kapoks, tamarind trees, and acacia albida trees. There is nothing to prevent one from seeing the horizon in the savanna. Both the sky above and the land can be seen clearly. In the following cumulative story one can visualize the various aspects of the savanna environment.

The Pigeon and the Small Spindle

A pigeon and a small spindle were good friends. One day the pigeon took his friend on his wing and flew over the river. The small spindle fell into the river. The pigeon kept asking for help, but each time the help involved getting it from someone else. He finally got help and rescued his friend from the river. The final formula is: people give him a calabash; he gives it to a butter-maker; the butter-maker gives him butter; he gives the butter to a woodworker to put on his hands; the woodworker gives him a mortar; he gives the mortar to millet-pounders; the millet-pounders pound millet and give him bran; he feeds the bran to some donkeys until they get full; the biggest donkey dies; the eagles eat it until they get full; the shepherds give the pigeon a ewe; he gives the ewe to a spear-maker; the spear-maker gives him a spear; he rescues his friend, the small spindle, with the spear.2

The Fulbe distinguish three seasons: the rainy season (duumol), the dry, cold season (dabbunde), and the dry, hot season (ceedu in Cameroon; keedu in Togo). With the change of season, the world in which they live looks different. They are forced to change their life. The life in the hot, dry season is severe. Some cattle herders must drive their cows to a place where there is water and grass.

Mayrama and Her Elder Brother

A boy had an extremely beautiful sister. He fell in love with her and wanted to marry her. She refused, and ran away. An egret, a hare, and a cow turned into beautiful women, and came to tempt him, but he did not marry them. A whirlwind turned into a beautiful woman, and came to him. He married her. One day while a woman was plaiting her hair, many whirlwinds came and sang, “Duluudul, when the dry season comes, where shall we go and drink? Only to the big river”. When she heard the song, she turned back into a whirlwind, and flew away to the river.3

One can find a similar story in Cameroon:

The Divorced Woman and a Crested Crane

A divorced woman said she would never marry anyone with a scar on his neck. A crested crane turned into a handsome young man without a scar, came, and married the woman. He stayed with her. When the cold, dry season came, his fellow crested cranes came and sang to him: “Crested crane, get up. Let’s go away for the cold, dry season”. He answered. “Because of my wife, Hawwa, I am not going”. They repeated this sequence several times, but finally, he followed them and flew away.4

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Pastoralism as the Background of Folktales

There are relatively few Fulbe folktales that have pastoralism, and the related value system and world view as their central theme. In most cases elements of pastoralism appear only as the background of the story. The pastoral elements can be replaced by other expressions in corresponding folktales told by agriculturalists, without changing the type and spirit of the tales.

In Fulbe stories there are many cattle names. Some examples of these are rimare “old cow past bearing”, wiiye “heifer of 2-3 years”, and niiniye “cow with white forehead”. These descriptions give an authentic flavor to the stories.

All the storytellers in the world express their ideas using figurative expressions that can be found easily in their own environment. The Fulbe storytellers use abundant metaphoric expressions from their pastoralist life. For example, instead of saying “as white as snow”, the Fulbe in Togo say “as white as fresh milk (no rawni kama biraadan)” or “as white as milk (rawni ha faccer kosaan)” etc. These expressions are by-products of pastoralist life and add flavor to the stories.

The Three Sons and the Cow

A man had three sons, and a cow. The three sons took the cow to graze in the bush. The cow ate and drank till she was full, but when she came home, she lied to the sons’ father and said that she had not been fed or watered enough. The father drove them away one after another. The father took the cow to the bush, grazed her, and watered her. But when they came home, the cow lied and said that he had not grazed nor watered her. The father found that the cow was a liar. The first son stayed with a man who rented out donkeys, and worked for him. The second son became the apprentice of a carpenter. The third son became hoe maker. When the sons were going home, their masters gave them a donkey that vomited money, a table that produced food, and a stick that would hit anyone. On their way home the first two brothers, one after the other, stayed in a house where the master stole the donkey and the table while they were asleep, substituting similar but worthless objects. When they got home, they tried to give money and food to the villagers, but they could not. They went back to look for the lost objects. The third son met his brothers. With his stick, he recovered the lost objects. They went home and gave their villagers jewels and food. When the villagers became too greedy, the third son drove them away with his stick.

This is a Fulbe version of the tale of “The Table, the Ass, and the Stick”. It is one of the most widely distributed stories, known in West Africa as well as Europe. The above-cited story begins with a lying cow. Because of this lying cow, three children were cast out of their home. This beginning is quite different from that of most of the versions told in West Africa, which start with famine (Calame-Griaule & Görög-Karady 1972). Another Fulbe version shares the same introductory part with other West-African counterparts. Thus, one cannot conclude that all the Fulbe versions of this tale-type start in the same way. But we can see the influence of the pastoralist way of life in the version told above, that of Yuusufa Siddiiki.

5. Taylor (1932: 240-242) enumerates 82 cattle names.
7. AT 563 (AT refers to AARNE 1961).
8. “Omaru and the Calabash”, told by Abdulaay Usmaanu in Maroua (from my field notes).
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In the Fulbe version of the story "Profitable Exchange" (AT 1655), the Fulbe storyteller never forgets to add cows to the wife he wins at the end in exchange for an insect. The order of exchange is as follows: an insect, water with millet flour, tilapia, grass mat, knife, little bull, dead body, girl and three cows. The hero uses shrewdness to obtain a girl from a dead body. Below is another example.

**Dugoseere**

A childless father who desperately wanted a baby was advised to fill a wooden bowl with butter. He kept the bowl covered for a long time. The butter turned into a worm, and the worm became a baby girl. The girl was named Dugoseere. The baby grew up to be a beautiful girl. A chief married her. The girl’s mother told the chief not to let her stay near a fire. The chief made a bathing pool for her. His co-wives cooked for her. One day the co-wives went away on a journey. The chief had visitors and told her to cook. When she had almost finished cooking, she melted and died. The chief sent a crested crane to bring his wife’s parents.

This is a story about a couple who do not have children, and want to have a child by any means. In another version, the hero is a boy, but the meaning is the same. When the childless parents’ supplication is heard, an inanimate object turns into a human being and becomes a child. But in the end, someone breaks a taboo, and the child disappears. Anything can be transformed into a child in this kind of story. For example, a tree and a sweet potato among the Fon (Herskovits 1958: 322-449, 450), a yam among the Bambara (Görög-Karady 1974: 91-93), and the Malinke (Equilbecq 1972: 205-206), *natoŋ* (*Pterocarpus erinaceus*) among the Moba of Northern Togo, etc.

**Milking: birugo in Cameroon, birude in Togo**

Although storytellers do not give us a detailed description of pastoralism, pastoralist life is the context of many folktales. The pastoralist life begins with milking in the morning. First the milker has the cow’s calf come and suck its mother’s udder a few times to start the milk flowing. Then, after tying the calf to the mother’s foreleg, he begins milking and receiving the milk in his calabash. In Northern Togo, milking is done only by men. In Northern Cameroon both men and women milk. Milking scenes appear in many Fulbe stories.

**The Chief and His Daughter**

A chief conceals his daughter in a hut. A hare goes inside and makes her pregnant. The chief orders the hare to carry out certain tasks to legitimize the marriage. He orders the hare to bring an elephant’s tusk, the skin of a wildcat, the hair of a dwarf, mucus from a viper’s nose, and milk from a bush cow. The hare tells a bush cow to hit a baobab tree with her head. Her head sticks to the baobab tree. Then he tells her to call her child to come and suckle her udder. Then he milks her...

11. "Maa’ele" told by Hammadu Dargala in Maroua (from my field notes).
12. Data from my field notes. See also SEYDOU 1984.
The importance here lies in the detail. The hare tells the bush cow to call her child, and let it suckle the udder before he milks. This illustrates an intimate knowledge of the milking process that one would be unlikely to find in non-pastoralist folktales.

**The Hyena and the Calves**

A hyena saw some calves. The calves were wagging their tails. The hyena followed them home. Some young people caught it and tied it to a peg. They kept milking until night. The hyena was the only one that had not suckled yet. A young man told someone to untether it. It mooed. It came and suckled a cow. The young people tethered it again. The next morning they milked, but did not let it suckle. Instead they tied its four legs together. They came to brand it but a young man branded the rope by mistake, and the hyena ran away. The hyena said the calves had called it to suckle but it could not.14

Sometimes cattle-herders go far from home, and spend a few months in the bush. Mostly, however, they just stay in the bush close to their villages and towns. They keep the calves at home, to prevent them from exhausting their mothers’ milk supply. The cows are milked in the evening when they return to the cattle camp. Because cattle-herders live on milk, the action of milking is very important. This monotonous rhythm of milking and herding goes on and on; there is no holiday. The most frequent expression of pastoral activity in the tales is the description of milking. Milking is a second nature—it seems that milking is as easy for a pastoralist as weeding with a hoe is for an agriculturalist.

**Head**

There was a child who had only a head. Head could only roll. Head was alone. He went to a corral that belonged to a hyena, a panther, and a lion. When the hyena and the lion took the cattle out to graze in the bush, the panther stayed behind to watch the calves. The panther was watching so that no one could come and drink their milk, nor eat their calves. Head played with the panther, and tied him up. He drank some milk, roasted a calf, and ate it. The hyena and the lion came home and asked the panther to untether the calves for the milking. They found the panther tied up. The next day, the hyena stayed home to watch the calves. Head came and did the same thing to him. The panther and the lion came home and found him tied up. The next morning the lion stayed home to watch the calves. Head came, did the same thing to the lion, and set him ablaze together with the hut. He took the calves away with him.15

When the milk is distributed in the family, some women sell fresh milk (*biraadam*); some produce butter and sour milk to sell. All descriptions of the treatment of milk in folktales come out of daily observations.

**The Crested Crane and the Pelican**

A crested crane was churning some milk in her gourd. She broke a millet ball, put it in the milk, and ate it. A pelican came and insulted the crested crane. They began to fight. They went to a judge. The crested crane said: “I found her churning milk in my gourd.” People lifted the pelican up and threw her down. The pelican farted. They laughed.16

Grazing (*dungen*, *ngaynaaka*) as a daily chore

As long as one keeps cattle, one must graze and water them every day. Cattle-herders take the cattle to the bush to graze. Some people hire men to herd their cattle, while others tend their own cattle. A hired cattle-herder (*gaynaako* / *waynaabe*) used to earn a calf every six months. The minimal unit of a cattle herd is about fifty head, which can be taken care of by one herder. Some able herders can take care of almost a hundred head. There are one or two seed bulls in a herd. A cattle-herder must follow the rhythm of the cattle. He must take care of them from the morning milking till evening. It is hard work. Sometimes it becomes the daily chore of a poor orphan.

*The Orphan*

When his father and mother died, an orphan was obliged to herd cattle, fill water pots, and sweep the hut and doorway. He had a stepmother and a half-brother. One day when he came home from herding in the bush, his stepmother tied him to the pillar of a shelter with a tethering rope (*boggol nagge*). The boy ate food with his dog from the dog’s broken earthenware pot. One day a wind blew and carried him to a non-Fulbe compound in the forest. A non-Fulbe couple found him, and brought him up. One day he happened to meet his cruel stepmother again.17

Sometimes a character takes the cows far into the bush where frightening non-human beings live.

*The Girl and the Lion*

A girl married on the other side of the bush. When she got angry at her husband and was coming back to her parents’ village, she was caught by a lion. She stayed in the lion’s compound. One day her younger brother grazed cows and caught a bird. He went to broil the bird in the nearby compound. He found his sister there. The next morning the boy took his mother to the lion’s compound. The mother hid in the compound, and ran away with her daughter to her home. The lion followed them, but fell into a hole containing burning charcoal.18

There are some stories about driving cattle a long way in search of water. Yet, when a desperate herder arrives at the water with thirsty cattle, he must fight a snake that can revive after its head is cut off several times. This is one of the favorite stories of the Fulbe of Northern Cameroon.

*Daararo*

A boy called Daararo was always given cow urine to drink, and food cooked with cow urine19 by his mother. A drought came, and there was little water. He took all the cattle and sheep, and set on a trip to a faraway pond called Ginagina. On the way he met an old woman with a daughter whom she did not want to marry off. When he arrived at the pond he found the children of a snake. He killed all but one. He watered the cattle. When the mother snake came back, it found all its children slaughtered except one. Daararo said to the little snake: “When your mother comes

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19. The Fulbe people often drink cow urine. They say it is good for health. The Northern Cameroonian Fulbe use it as a remedy for mycosis of the feet.
back, tell her my name is Daararo, the one who watered and grazed the cattle at Gingina.” The snake chased Daararo for a long time. The snake and Daararo fought. When Daararo cut off the snake’s head, it grew back several times. Finally Daararo killed the snake. He took the liver and lungs from it. On the way home, he met the old woman and her daughter. He gave the liver and lungs to the old woman. She ate them and died. He took the daughter back with him as his wife.20

The story in itself is too simple, but people enjoy the songs which Daararo and the snake sing.

Cattle (na’i) as wealth (jawdi)

There are folktales in which the pastoralist world view and value system play a particularly important role. It would not be an exaggeration to say that for the Fulbe cattle is everything; and the first thing they associate with wealth is cattle, regardless of their present occupation or where they live.

The next story tells what the sedentary Fulbe have in their compound, in order of importance. Cattle are the most important next to one’s father.

The Boy called Bilaali

A boy called Bilaali went to the bush and found a bird. The bird told him to feed it. Bilaali took it home and fed it some millet. It was not full. He gave it all the millet in the granary, but it was not full. He gave it some ewes, but it was not full. He gave it all their cattle. It was not full. He gave it his father. It was not full. He gave his mother. It was not full. When it tried to fly, its belly burst and it died (Eguchi 1980: 358-363).

In another version of this story,21 the order of things fed to the glutton bird is as follows: all the sorghum in the granary, pennisetum, yolobri sorghum, majeeri sorghum, beans, Bambara groundnuts, all the cattle in the corral, sheep, goats, brothers, sisters, and parents. Here the storyteller classifies the cattle as domestic animals. Probably he thought of the cattle first.

One of these people’s biggest dreams is to have cattle and to increase their number. Sometimes they become greedy and try all kinds of ways to become wealthy in this way.

Junni and Sammbo’s Mother

Junni had cows. Sammbo did not. They were half brothers. Their father died. Junni’s mother died. Sammbo’s mother tried to feed Junni rice with poison. When Junni came back from the bush with his cows, his little dog told Junni not to eat the rice. Junni did not eat it. One day Sammbo’s mother contacted a wild animal and asked it to catch Junni. Night came. Junni let Sammbo fall asleep, then stood up, lifted up Sammbo, and put him near the exit. Junni lay down near Sammbo’s mother. When the animal came, it took away Sammbo. The next morning Sammbo’s mother slaughtered a ewe and prepared food to give her own son. Instead she found Junni. She turned into a red rock out of shame.

Junni swallowed all his cows, ewes, and chickens into his belly. He rolled to a village, and found two girls. He married one of them. He vomited all that he had in his belly. He gave cows, ewes, and waistcloths to the bride’s family. He stayed there.22

20. Told by Saali Maana in Maroua (from my field notes).
21. Told by Lisa in Maroua (from my field notes).
Raamata Ali’s version of the same story says Junni “had his wealth, namely, his cattle (no woodi jawdi mug, na’i mug)” (Eguchi 1994: 320-325).

The Cameroonian Fulbe story of “Enfant malin”, which bears many names, such as Sammbbo Degene, Sammbbo Degeje, Sammbbo Degene, Kecco Calordo, etc., begins with a speech contest. In this story the famous motif of whether a male animal can bear a child appears. The contestant who can beat the other with a logical speech takes the other’s cows. In most stories, a rich chief with many cattle, but weak in logic, is beaten by a child, and the child gets all the chief’s cattle.

The feeling that cattle is wealth is realized in the form of folktales in which cattle are given as rewards. One of the stories most loved by the Fulbe is the tale of “The Good Girl and the Bad Girl” and its variants.

An orphan girl is driven away by her stepmother to wash skin on which she spilt fresh milk, or to have calabash mended. She encounters tests before she arrives at a far-away land. In the faraway land she listens to an old person, or a leper, and follows his/her instructions faithfully. She goes through difficulties with patience. When she comes home, the person in the strange land gives her gourds. Out of the gourds come wealth, and she becomes wealthy. Her bad sister tries to get the same wealth, but fails because of her lack of virtue.23

Nowadays many of these stories depict the “wealth” as gold, silver, and cowries; but there are still stories which represent pastoralist Fulbe values. The following passage is taken from one such story, called “The Stepmother and the Orphan”.24

Now, the orphan girl believed what the non-Fulbe girl said. She took her calabash, left, went into the bush, and threw down the middle-size bottle. Wealth (jawdi) burst out of it. She kept on, driving the livestock. When she was far away from the non-Fulbe girl’s village, she threw down the small bottle. Cattle-herders, shepherds, and men who tend chickens and guinea fowl came out. They drove her animals for her as she went home. When they had gone farther, she threw the big calabash. Elephants, lions, wild cats, and snakes came out. Her servants united their strength, and drove them away fiercely. They kept going. They reached home. They came home with wealth.

Theft of cattle is a daily affair. If one is not careful, the cattle can be easily stolen. The search for lost cattle is one of the favorite topics. The hero always recovers the stolen cattle after a fight, and comes home triumphantly. The hero asks the people he meets on the way if they have seen his cattle, describing the characteristics of his herd in the form of a song.

The Stolen Cattle and the Boy

There was a boy whose father had died. Some non-Fulbe people (Haabe) stole the boy’s father’s cattle. The head cow in the herd was called Jaale. The boy set out on a journey to recover his father’s cattle. On the way he asked people, singing: “Jaale, Jaale, my father’s child, of the red cows, which eat grass, go in the middle of the karal field, and walk through the vast plain.” They told him which way his father’s cattle had gone. After a long time, he reached his cattle. He fought with the non-Fulbe people and recovered the cattle. He came home.25

25. Told by Hammadu Dargala in Maroua (from my field notes).
Cattle as Welfare

Because the Fulbe are Muslins, they do not say explicitly that cattle is the most important thing in the world. But some Fulbe say one can live on milk alone. They endlessly enumerate good points about cows. They utilize the milk, meat, bones, dung, skins, and even urine. The cattle can be considered a symbol of well-being. The significance of cattle in the Fulbe existence is manifested in the fact that they classify the cow in the nge-class of nouns. Only a cow (nagge), the sun (naange), and fire (yiite) belong to this class.

The Orphan and Buliyaaro

A Pullo bought a cow. He died, and left his wife behind. When she was dying, she told her son that the cow would look after him. The cow looked after him. The boy took her out to graze. When they came back, she cooked millet, and he ate it. When he went into the hut and lay down, she closed the door. When morning came, she opened the door for him. He rode on the cow. The chief’s children found the cow. They told their father. The chief ordered them to kill her. The boy insisted that it was the who cow that looked after him, and they should not kill her. They took her and tried to kill her, but she refused to be killed. The boy sang to her, and told her to be killed. She was killed, but she refused to fall down. He sang to her, and told her to fall down. She fell down. She refused to be skinned, cut into pieces, cooked, and chewed. On each occasion the boy sang to her, and she followed his orders. When the chief and his family had eaten the meat, they accepted the boy into their family. The chief gave him a wife and a house. He stayed there and fathered children.26

In the following story, a cow plays a key role in saving her master’s daughter. A cow called Sole takes the family slave to the pond and moos to her daughter. The daughter responds with a song. The cow not only creates a way to the solution of the problem, but also plays a more definite role by stopping the revival of the snake. The role of this cow is mythical. This cow is more than wealth.

Naanumi

A woman filled her co-wife’s pot with clay, put some water on top of it at the river, and went home. The co-wife could not lift the pot. A snake appeared and helped her carry the pot in exchange for the baby the woman would give birth to. The woman gave birth to a girl and named her Naanumi. Naanumi grew up. One day the snake came and took her away to the pond. She stayed there with the snake. One day Naanumi’s family slave was grazing the cattle near the pond. One of their cows, called Sole, moosed. Naanumi heard her moosing and sang a song back to her. Sole answered her. The slave went home and told his master about it. The master killed him. The next day another slave heard Naanumi’s song, but his master did not believe him either, and killed him. The next day another slave told the same story, and the master finally believed it. Naanumi’s father took his men and went to the pond. Sole moosed, and Naanumi answered her with a song. Her father scooped up the water in the pond, and started fighting with the snake. Even when they cut off the snake’s head, it came back several times. Finally, Sole trampled the snake’s head before it came back to the body. Naanumi was rescued. When Naanumi came home, she asked for her mother’s co-wife to be hanged. They killed the malicious woman.27

Here we have a similar story from a rather nomadic Fulbe people.

**The Jealous Sister who Killed her Younger Sister**

A man begot two daughters. The elder daughter asked people who was the more beautiful between them. They said that the younger sister was more beautiful than she. When the daughters went to a river, the elder sister told her younger sister to go into the water. Then she tried to drown her, and left her there. A big bird came, drank all the water in the river, and saved her. The bird made her his wife, and kept her in the baobab tree in the bush. She gave birth to a boy. One day her father's herdsman came to graze the cattle. A cow called Saaje mooed. The girl heard Saaje's voice, recognized that it was her father's cow, and sang a song to her. Saaje answered. The herdsman went home, and returned again to the bush. Saaje mooed. The daughter heard her and sang a song. The herdsman told the story to her father. Her father and his people came to the bush, cut down the baobab tree, and rescued her. The big bird came back, but could not find her and his child.28

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As shown above, the Fulbe folktales cannot be separated from pastoralism. Although most of the Fulbe in Cameroon and Togo have already become sedentary and adopted agriculture, they still keep cattle, and their ideal is the pastoralist life. Thus, pastoralism occupies an important place in their identity and thinking.

But their folktales do not state directly and straightforwardly that the Fulbe identity cannot be separated from pastoralism, as do other genres of Fulbe oral literature in Northern Cameroon, such as cattle-herders' songs called daacol / daaci, the mbooku songs, and legendary stories called kiistawol / kiistaaji. One mbooku line, for example, says, *Fulbe banndu na'i muudum* ("The Fulbe and cattle are kin") (Egu-chi 1993: 181-200). In legendary stories, told as if they had really taken place, there are many stories about how people dealt with cattle.

What are some of the reasons for this difference between folktales and other genres? One is probably that the most important function of folktales is pleasure and entertainment, rather than assuring one's identity, as in the case of other genres. Second, the story-tellers tell most parts of stories unconsciously. The professional entertainers who perform other genres deliberately try to arouse their clients feelings of pride and identity, in order to earn their reward. A third factor is that folktales are only told at night. Many people say that folktales are "lies." They are distinguished from narratives told in the daytime which are considered to be true. There must be a parallelism: night/day, lie/truth, unconscious/conscious. According to tradition, when one starts telling a folktale, one is free to say anything unrealistic and imaginative.

In conclusion, although the majority of Fulbe in Cameroon and Togo are sedentary semi-pastoralists, their folktales provide an illustration of how strong is the pastoralist identity in their unconsciousness.

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28. Told by a Bo'daa'do Hontor'be man in Biibeemi (from unpublished field notes).
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