a Leveton, MS, MFT, received her master's degree in psychology from San ancisco State College. She is also a graduate of the Mental Research Institute's tensive Family Therapy Training Program and has combined her academic aining with her experience as a professional actress to develop and teach sychodramatic techniques, which earned her the Zerka T. Moreno Award for istinguished work in psychodrama, sociometry, and group psychotherapy in 004. Together with her husband, Alan Leveton, a psychiatrist, and Ben Hanleman, a social worker, she founded the Family Therapy Center in San Francisco 1966–1994). Her deep commitment to helping families and individuals hrough the combined use of psychodrama, sociodrama, and family therapy has ed her to teach in many parts of the world—Germany, Austria, Africa, India, China, and Turkey, as well as Poland and Romania, through her association with the Psychodrama Institute for Europe. She has given many presentations at the American Association for Group Therapy and Psychodrama and the National Association of Drama Therapy over the past 50 years.

An Associate Professor at the California Institute of Integral Studies, Eva Leveton teaches Family Therapy in the Somatics Program and Psychodrama in the Drama Therapy Program. Her major interest has been twofold: (1) to encourage the use of direct communication and experiential work, and (2) to combine these methods with responsible clinicianship, using an eclectic mix of developmental theories and adding social and political history to flesh out the work in the "here and now."

Eva Leveton has published many articles and three books: *A Clinician's Guide to Psychodrama* and *Adolescent Crisis: Family Counseling Approaches*, both published by Springer Publishing Company; and a memoir, *Eva's Berlin, Memories of a Wartime Childhood*, published by Thumbprint Press. She is widely translated. In recent years, she has used her own background in wartorn Berlin to join Armand Volkas' work of *Healing the Wounds of History* with groups of first-, second-, and third-generation Germans and Jews.

Semi-retired, Eva spends her time at home in San Rafael, California, gardening and playing with her three delightful grandchildren, Azure, Mateo, and Kira, as well as teaching Memoir Writing at the Redwoods Retirement Center in Mill Valley, where her oldest student is 101 years old.

Healing Collective Trauma Using Sociodrama and Drama Therapy

EVA LEVETON, MS, MFT

Editor

New York

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Springer Publishing Company, LLC
11 West 42nd Street
New York, NY 10036
www.springerpub.com

Acquisitions Editor: Sheri W. Sussman
Senior Editor: Rose Mary Piscitelli
Cover design: Steve Pisano
Composition: International Graphic Services

Ebook ISBN: 978-0-8261-0487-8

10 11 12 13/ 5 4 3 2 1

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Healing collective trauma using sociodrama and drama therapy / Eva Leveton, editor.
p. ; cm.
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 978-0-8261-0486-1 (alk. paper)
1. Drama—Therapeutic use. 2. Sociodrama. I. Leveton, Eva.
[DNLM: 1. Stress Disorders, Post-Traumatic—therapy. 2. Psychodrama—methods.
WM 170 H4332 2010]
RC489.P7H43 2010
616.89'1523—dc22

2010008763

Printed in the United States of America by Hamilton Printing

For my family, who endured the long absences (mental and physical); to all those sociodramatists and psychodramatists who travel the world in an effort to make it better; and to my students, who teach me something new every day.

I also dedicate this book to the many unsung heroes who travel the world facing groups beset by the consequences of war, disaster, and political oppression. Their courage, their imagination, their heartfelt dedication, and their willingness to endure hardship in order to help others is an inspiration to us all.

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9 Re-Reconciling Culture-Based Conflicts With "Culture-Drama"

JON P. KIRBY AND GONG SHU

Authors' Profiles

Jon P. Kirby: *My journey to Ghana was prompted by my religious order. After spending some 13 years in training to be a missionary I was asked to choose where I wanted to spend the rest of my life. I had always fancied myself "a real missionary," deep in the Amazon, where I could study anthropology. Well, things don't often turn out as we expect. When my turn came to go into my superior's office to find out my "desideratum," the word "Ghana" was sounded. That fateful moment still rings in my ears. The comforting presence of a much-loved colleague, Fr. Kofi Ron Lange, who was on leave from Ghana at the time turned me around. Through his efforts, I became the first SVD missionary in Ghana to be given a full 6 months just to study the language. Soon, I was seeing the world from their perspective. And what a wonderful vision that was. Later, my anthropological studies provided the means to deepen this relationship which kept me in the wilds learning from the people. And it is here that culture-drama has its true roots, for it is merely the knowledge of the people intensified and made explicit.*

Gong Shu: *In 1979, when I was an expressive arts therapist using art therapy and psychodrama at the House of Affirmation, a psychiatric residential treatment center for religious (an African term for church-affiliated workers), my work brought me in close touch with missionaries from various parts of the world. Culture drama*

was used since then to help resolve conflicts among the residents. I was first attracted to go to Africa because of my work with a Ghanian religious. The Provincial of this religious appreciated my work and requested that I go to Ghana in 1989. He wanted me to help resolve the conflicts among the missionaries coming from various parts of the world as well as the conflicts between the missionaries and the local religious communities. He scheduled six workshops for me to do in one month's time, starting from Accra in the south to Wa in the north. In these workshops, I was able to help the groups realize how cultural differences contributed to the miscommunication, through the processes of culture drama which I have continued to develop in various parts of the world, among them, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Mainland China.

Jon Kirby, director of the Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies, participated in the last of my six workshops in Ghana, which ranged from Accra to Wa. We discovered that we were kindred spirits and he joined me in my work both in Ghana and other parts of Africa, developing Culture Drama as a cross-cultural discipline of Anthropology and Psychodrama.

Fr. Jon P. Kirby, PhD, SVD, is a Catholic priest, a theologian, and a social anthropologist. Beginning in 1972, he worked in Ghana for 36 years as a missionary, an anthropologist, a cross-cultural trainer, and, since 1989, as a culture-drama facilitator. He has taught at Ghana's University for Development Studies, and, for 25 years, served as the founder-director of Tamale Institute of Cross-Cultural Studies (www.ticcs.org), which is a research and teaching facilty for applied ministry and development. In the United States he has held positions at Catholic Theological Union, Boston University, and Washington Theological Union and is a member of many professional organizations, including Anthropos Institute, the American Anthropological Association, the African Studies Association, the American Academy of Religion, the American Society of Missiology, and the United States Catholic Mission Association. He has published widely.

Gong Shu, PhD, ATR, TEP, LCSW, is an internationally known psycho- and sociodramatist who has received both the Hannah Weiner Award of the ASGPP and the Outstanding Achievement Award in Traditional Medicine. She has published widely and is known for her work in Asia, Europe, and the United States. Gong Shu is also the founder of the International Zerka Moreno Institute, with branches in St. Louis, Taipeh, and soon China, and is a founder of the Center for Creative Development.

INTRODUCTION

The middle-aged man, eyes rolling and rigid with fear, was dragged off the bus by his accusers as they sounded the alarm: "Konkomba! Konkomba!" Before he reached the bottom step he was swept away by the roiling mob and an instant later dispatched by five or six flailing Dagomba cutlasses. At the edge of the crowd, barely able to contain his shock and terror, stood another man who, despite his efforts to add to the murderous refrain "Kill him! Kill him!" seemed strangely out of place. His demeanor furtive; his eyes cautiously darted to his Dagomba neighbors, then down to his torn "canvas" shoes, and at the sight of the bloodied machetes raised high in victory, he nervously tried to reduce his large frame to nothing. He too was a Konkomba, and if the slightest hint of his true identity, like the unbidden sweat beading up on his forehead, ever broke through, he dared not think what would happen.

Hundreds such scenes occurred across Northern Ghana in the days following the outbreak of the infamous "Northern Conflict" of February and March 1994—scenes that, due partly to the overshadowing Rwanda-Burundi affair and partly to a well-orchestrated governmental cover-up, hardly garnered the attention of Southern Ghana, let alone the rest of the world. Nonetheless, it was estimated that up to 20,000 people lost their lives and more than 200,000 were deprived of their land and all their earthly possessions and were forced into exile as refugees (Bogner, 2000; Katanga, 1994a, 1994b; Kirby, 2003; Pul, 2003; van der Lingde & Naylor, 1994). They remain so to this day and the cities where these dramatic events unfolded are even now more segregated tribally than was Johannesburg at the height of apartheid.

This describes the opening scene for the culture-drama workshop that unfolded in March 2002, 8 years after the conflict (Kirby, 2002). The 20 workshop participants, who belonged to the two major conflicting groups, Konkombas and Dagombas, had all experienced events like these, and, for this reason, they had to be individually chosen and well prepared. Nevertheless, it was with extreme care and trepidation that my colleague, Dr. Gong Shu, and I coaxed and cajoled them to engage in the process of full recall and re-enactment—the first steps along the road to reconciliation. For we were all too conscious of the terror, lurking beneath the surface, that could be unleashed at any false step.

experience they are trying to act out misstep by misstep. Gradually it dawns on the participants that they really do not know the other. And to learn about the other, they are obliged to learn about themselves. In scene after scene, it becomes clearer how alone and isolated we really are, on our separate cultural pathways. Long-accepted but unsteady, perhaps even faulty, judgments relegate these "others" to lesser or imperfect versions of ourselves. At this point the "hidden self" leaps out and can be recognized, named, and accepted for what it is. At this point it may be negotiated or changed. One can begin to ask how much I am willing and able to change *my own* cultural pathways in ways that accommodate the other's ways of thinking and believing, valuing and behaving. Each side needs first to negotiate with themselves before the "transformative" work—the work of forming a new way of being together—can begin. Here is the magic of culture-drama: it gets to those darkened and powerful areas of our cultural unconscious, the areas that move us along without a question or a thought. In the same instant it cracks open our pre-suppositions about ourselves and the other.

HISTORY OF CULTURE-DRAMA

When Shu, who was well known for her work with Catholic priests and brothers in the United States, was called in to help with discussions, she was convinced that the problem was not that they were ill but that the conflicts were due to cultural differences. She felt the solution was simply to get these culturally mixed groups to engage in leisure activities together instead of just sitting around watching television (Kirby, 2003; Shu & Kirby, 1992). This goal was greatly aided by teaming up with the co-author, Jon Kirby, who is an anthropologist with a great deal of experience working with different culture groups in Ghana. Together they developed the unique method of "culture-drama."

CULTURAL PATHWAYS IN CONFLICT

Notwithstanding individual differences and personal problems, the cultural perspective focuses exclusively on collective differences and issues—the European perspective versus the Ghanaian perspective. Here, "conflict" is understood in terms of oppositions in the groups' "cultural pathways" rather than the differences between individuals. The importance of this perspective can be illustrated by showing the differences between the two culturally embedded notions of European charity versus African hospitality.

The Europeans complained that the Africans were not "good" community members and were not behaving as "good" members of the religious order ought to behave. The Africans, even more vocal, complained that the Europeans were "not even good human beings!" They were "just bad!" But neither group was able to explain what they meant, or offer concrete examples. It was at this point that we usually asked them to stop talking and begin role-playing.

THE COMMON ROOM SCENE

The primary focus of community conflict is the "common room," the very place where we are running the culture-drama session. Actors are chosen, two from each group, and the first scene is set by moving around some of the furniture. It is a visit from a friend of one of the African brothers.

The scene begins with a knock at the door. The African brother gets up to answer the door. A long litany of greetings in the local language along with interspersed laughter fills the room. We intervene to explain the rules of role-reversal and how to interrupt with questions and observations. Hesitantly they begin again in reversed roles. But it is not long before they are interrupted. "We don't do it like that," says the Ghanaian to his European colleague who is trying to imitate what has just transpired. "You can see your brother through the window, wave to him as you approach the door. Don't let him just stand there; begin welcoming him in with enthusiasm."

One of the Europeans begins to address the Ghanaian who is playing the part of a European sitting down reading the newspaper with a scowl. "Why are you wearing such a mad face?" he says. "Is that supposed to be me? I don't behave like that, do I?"

"Yes, that's you," they all respond in unison.

There is a pause. He thinks it over and responds, "Well if I do behave that way it must be for a good reason."

"Show us, don't talk about it," we insist.

Over the course of two more interruptions, they work their way through the greetings and cross the threshold to the common room. They are now seated and a round of introductions begins: "Welcome to our home," says the European (playing the part of a Ghanaian).

Immediately "red flags" go up from the Ghanaians. "You must give him water before any official welcome!"

Action resumes. But when the actor opens the fridge he finds it full of food; no water.

Once again "red flags" go up. "Um-humm! You see? Every time we put water in the fridge you remove it and replace it with your cheese. Now you see the problem. When you do that we can't welcome our friends properly. So we remove the cheese and put the water back."

THE ANALYSIS

Culture-drama enables the participants to concretize their unarticulated, implicit pathways and, through the enactments, get to the roots of the problem. The full meaning of the cultural "event" is conveyed by the total context, including the use of space, objects, and the actions, much more than simply by words. This is the principle of "action insight" which will be described more in detail below.

The scenes convey the cultural meaning. The "community room," the "fridge," and the "water" are all essential components of the customary practice of welcoming in Ghana. For example, one "conflict" arises from the different and conflicting cultural expectations concerning "hospitality." The different expectations and uses of the fridge become clear in the scene. But these rest on deeper foundations. The meaning and use of food versus drink is different in each culture. In Africa, much more than in Europe, food and drink are rigorously required components of hospitality and fridges are part of this cultural complex.

SOCIAL CONTEXTS OF HOSPITALITY

In Africa, the cultural meaning of fridge is intimately linked with "drinks" and the initiating of hospitality. Of course, until quite recently, there were no fridges in Africa. In the past this "welcome water" was kept cool in clay pots. Cool water brings cool, or peaceful relations.

Although food is the consummate mark of hospitality, it can be offered only after the relations have first been initiated through drink. Rituals follow the same pattern. Libations precede the "sacrificial food." But food, unlike drink, is never served cold. It is always freshly prepared and hot. The sharing requires a "sit-down meal" with all the social trappings including an overnight stay. In Africa, "food" normally refers to the starchy staple which spoils quickly, even if refrigerated, and therefore needs to be entirely eaten at a sitting. There are no leftovers for the fridge. Therefore, "food" is not associated with fridges in the same way that "drink" is.

Accordingly, fridges are not limited to the kitchen, as they are in Europe and America, but are found in areas where relationships are initiated; where people meet, sit, and talk. For example, offices are usually equipped with small fridges located within easy reach of the desk. African hosts are required to welcome into their living space all and sundry by offering the primary requisite of cold water. The appearance of the fridge in the workplace, especially in the boss's office, enables the "big man" to welcome a continuous flow of visitors, business associates, and fellow workers.

THE HOSPITALITY RITUAL

Throughout Africa, water is the primary symbol of hospitality. It is absolutely necessary in forming and sustaining relationships, and relationships are needed to sustain life. If this "action chain" is broken, as the great popularizer of culture, Edward Hall, has so clearly demonstrated (1966), peoples' unfulfilled expectations lead to fear and confusion, which in turn lead to flight-or-fight. Thus, "welcome water" can never be refused. It must always be accepted, or at least acknowledged, because hospitality binds all, enemies included, at the most basic level of our common human identity. Similarly, its influence extends beyond relations in the "seen world," between people in everyday life, to relations in the "unseen world," with spirits and ancestors. Here too, it is the first step in establishing and sustaining relationships.

To sum up, fridges are for water, water is for relationships, and relationships are for promoting and sustaining life. In Africa, spiritual and physical life are one. If water, and by extension, the fridge, are repositories of life, they are also symbols that foster spiritual energy or

are conduits of creative life. Thus, they involve a religious obligation and a moral necessity. To the African, this is unquestionably something that God fully endorses and requires of us, for as proverbial wisdom would have it, "The stranger is God" (Lange, 1998).

From this perspective it is quite logical and consequent for Africans to wonder how their European brothers and sisters, who are at times referred to as "holy religious," can presume to interrupt or short-circuit what is understood to be "God's holy activity." It is not any wonder, therefore, that the Africans said, "as for them, they are just bad!"

THE EUROPEAN VIEW

Not so for the Europeans. Their meanings and expectations are primarily constructed around a much narrower concept of community. The "common room" of a religious community is a cloistered inner sanctum for the common life of its members; not the open "meeting room" at the entrance to African compounds. Only members of the order (the religious group) or other clerics and intimate associates are admitted. In the minds of Europeans, breaking this code is equated with not being a good religious.

During the scenes it became clear that the Europeans did not think it was appropriate to admit "outsiders" to their common room, especially the African friends of their African religious brothers. The African members of the religious community saw this as "wicked," given their understanding that "God's rules" are more important than any man-made book of rules. The fact that the Europeans did not seem to accord others the minimum recognition of their human-ness also led many to say: "They are not even human," or "They are racist," or the greatest sin of all, "They are selfish."

CULTURAL MEANINGS AND COMMUNAL HARMONY

Before enacting the drama, the participants were only able to voice their most general feelings that the other group somehow "had the wrong idea" or that "they were doing things all wrong." When the Africans referred to the Europeans as "inhuman" the meanings behind these statements were implicit, buried deep inside the cultural pathways, connected to the meanings embedded in "water," "fridge," and in their

conception and use of communal space. Culture-drama exposed these meanings, helped to foster acceptance and a more concrete, honest, and open dialogue leading to greater understanding, more give-and-take, a broader way of interpreting the community rules, and, eventually, to a more harmonious community life.

With sufficient time, culture-drama could serve as a vehicle to synthesize adjusted views, beliefs, and behavior and, in this way, lead to a new "peace culture." We offer an example of this below.

THE NORTHERN CONFLICT

Many political analysts oversimplified the 1994 "Northern Conflict" as one over scarce resources between two groups—the Konkombas, who were pictured as violent and "wild invaders" from neighboring countries, and the better-known Dagombas, who were generally regarded as the cultured leaders of the North (Mahama, 1989). The conflict itself was mocked and made light of by the government-controlled press as the "guinea-fowl war" because the spark that ignited the blaze was a quarrel between a Konkomba and a Dagomba over the market price of this animal. In actuality, the conflict covered most of the North and involved its peoples in a full-scale civil war.

The peoples of northern Ghana, like those of other countries stretching across the West African Savannah belt, are of two traditional political types. One type has chiefs and is politically structured as a "traditional state system" (Eyre-Smith, 1933; Goody, 1954, 1967/1969, 1971; Staniland, 1975; Wilks, 1961, 1971) comprising a bureaucracy that extends hierarchically over their own clans and subordinate peoples having different customs and languages.

The other type is without rulers or any formal structures of governance outside the extended family system (Kirby, 1986; Tait, 1958). Although these non-chiefly or "acephalous" groups in northern Ghana are usually referred to as "the minorities," they actually outnumber the "state system" peoples three to one. They are only the "minority" when it comes to political and economic power.

CHIEFLY VERSUS NONCHIEFLY PEOPLES

These two groups of peoples—the structured and unstructured, chiefly and non-chiefly—have been at loggerheads from the time that peoples

of the Western Sudan discovered the concept of state in ancient fifth-century Gana (Middleton & Tait, 1953). The Mole-Dagbon groups, of which the Dagombas are a sub-group, entered the area that is now northern Ghana in the 13th century as raiding break-away factions of other state groups further to the north (Wilks, 1971). Increasingly these groups came to be associated with literate Muslim clerics and gradually the Muslim calendar, clothing, art, customs, and beliefs became a part of their culture (Levtzion, 1968). From the seventeenth to the turn of the twentieth century, the powerful Asante coerced the northern state societies, including the Dagomba, to capture and deliver thousands of slaves, along with foodstuffs and livestock each year, which they gathered from the surrounding non-chiefly peoples. In the early twentieth century, under British colonial rule, the three northern chiefly groups were put in charge of the other 40 to 50 non-chiefly groups thus making "official" and normalizing this predatory relationship (Ferguson & Wilks, 1970; Tait, 1961). After Ghana's independence, under Nkrumah, this relationship continued (Ladouceur, 1979; Staniland, 1975).

Under the British administration the northern royals of the "major tribes" were educated to provide the system with clerks and administrators. But beginning in the 1950s, the British opened the North to missionaries, with the result that mission schools, hospitals, and other services were, for the first time, offered to the "minorities." These services continued and expanded after Independence throughout the 1960s and 1970s. By the mid-1970s the non-chiefly groups could boast of a larger educated elite than the chiefly groups, and by the end of the 70s full awareness of their repressed political and economic condition had led them into overt political opposition.

Ethnic conflicts, involving one or more of the chiefly groups against one or more of the non-chiefly groups, erupted in 1979 and continued until December 1993 when the non-chiefly groups demanded their full and equal rights, their own land, and their own chiefs. This was promptly rejected by the three chiefly groups, and within weeks the entire north was engulfed in armed conflict (Katanga, 1994b).

After a month of fighting, the combined chiefly groups had been roundly defeated by the non-chiefly peoples, and everyone feared an imminent attack on the Dagomba-controlled main cities of the north, Tamale and Yendi. The army was called in by the "majority groups" and they attacked the "minorities" with overwhelming ferocity. Unwilling to fight government forces, the non-chiefly forces simply "disappeared" into the bush leaving an "occupied North" under military law for more than a year. Only very slowly did the North come back to life.

In the aftermath of the war there were a number of unsuccessful peacebuilding efforts by the strongly biased government and by NGOs (Assefa, 2001). Gradually things calmed down. But up until now the war has never been resolved. For example, even now, in 2009, 15 years after the war, the non-chiefly peoples, especially the Konkomba, are not permitted to own property, hold jobs or reside in the two main urban centers of the North.

THE GHANAIAN WORKSHOP

The festering discontent, the division, and the deeper structural issues of the conflict between the "chiefly groups" (especially the Dagombas) and the "non-chiefly groups" (especially the Konkombas) were for the first time addressed in our 2002 culture-drama workshop. The workshop, comprising ten of each ethnic group, was sponsored by Catholic Relief Services, Ghana, at a conference center in the south, some 500 miles from where the fighting took place. For one intensive week, in complete seclusion, they worked toward building a lasting peace for themselves and the whole of Northern Ghana (Kirby, 2002).

Some of the major enactments centered on different points of view concerning "big-man" versus "small-man," "masters" versus "subjects," the role of "chiefs" versus "Earth shrine custodians" on the question of land tenure and ownership, and other areas of conflicting expectations, especially those regarding "freedom" and "constraint" (Kirby, 2002, 2003). The objective was to establish a genuine trust and interdependency so as to build from their conflicting pathways a number of basic shared pathways toward a new culture of peace (Kirby, 2007). Besides the "bus scene," which was the first, there were four other significant scenes which we will now describe.

The Chief Scene

The Konkomba playing the part of the Ya Na (King of Dagbon) was visibly moved. His eyes widened in a look of pleased disbelief as the Dagombas placed the chief's hat, the final touch of the Dagomba regal

attire, on his head. He was asked to play the role of the Ya Na, the "King of Dagbon," ruler of the most important ethnic group in Northern Ghana. No Konkomba could possibly know the many taboos, the refined postures and forms of etiquette that go with being King of Dagbon. The preparation for the role contributed to the conciliatory process. The regalia of the chief was so important, and so hemmed in by restrictions and taboos, that simply getting access to it, to say nothing of actually using it in a role-play, required much tact. The effect of having real artifacts was tremendous.

As we were about to begin, the Konkombas intently watched the faces of the Dagombas for any reaction. There was something more than role-playing here. But not only were their worst fears demolished by what they saw, they were emphatically moved. The way the Dagombas helped the Konkomba, who played the role of the Ya Na, to act "kingly" and to wear the regal attire, and the way they tutored them on how and when to sit, stand, and move about, to direct their courtiers and to "look regal," immediately dispelled the greatest fears of the Konkombas concerning their belief that the Dagombas looked down upon them, considered them beneath their dignity, unfit to rule, and unable to be chiefly. As the Dagombas vied with each other to help the Konkomba actor to be a "proper" Ya Na, this fear vanished.

Credibility was also greatly increased by the fact that one of the Dagomba participants was, in real life, the "Mionlana," a very powerful chief, next in the line of succession to the Ya Na. It also soon became clear to the Dagombas that the Konkombas did not hate them or even the idea of chieftaincy. They too could be moved by its power and dignity. But it was simply not a part of their culture.

The Marriage Dispute Scene

These powerful currents increased as the role-playing continued. The scene was set for the trial of a marriage dispute. Konkombas, like other non-chiefly peoples, have long been forced to submit to the judgments of Dagomba chiefs in cases of dispute-settlement. Most of these involve quarrels between Konkomba families over their claims to women, livestock or land. It was not unusual for the chief to settle such disputes by punishing both families with a fine and taking the woman as his own wife.

The Action

The scene is set. A sturdy coffee table serves as the King's dais. He sits above a throng of buzzing advisors as the disputing party is led into the makeshift court. "This man stole my wife and hasn't given me any compensation," the first man says.

Then action stops and some Konkombas intervene: "It is not simply a question of compensation. You Dagombas don't have the bridewealth system, but we Konkombas do."

"That is true. We Dagombas do not 'sell' our women," interjects a Dagomba.

"Neither do we," say the Konkombas in quick response. To acquire a wife, a man must work on his in-law's farm for seven years. This strengthens relations between the two families. If a wife is stolen by another man, everyone gets upset. A simple compensation does not cover the husband's time and trouble. Nor will it win him a new wife. The bad relations and consternation extend to all three families. The ancestors themselves demand vengeance and, in the vendetta that ensues, many will lose their lives.

Better informed about the heavy weight of his loss, the Dagomba acting the part of the jilted Konkomba says, "Please, chief, my wife has been stolen and our families are at a considerable loss." According to custom, this is translated to the chief by the "linguist" or spokesman of the court.

The chief then summons the defendant. "Let the other Konkomba man come in to speak." They bring in the other Konkomba (played by a Dagomba). But before he can utter a word the "red flags" go up.

A Konkomba says, "No, he wouldn't act like that. A real Konkomba would not know all the proper etiquette used in the presence of a chief and would embarrass himself." He then shows the Dagomba how a Konkomba would actually behave. Everyone laughs at the spectacle. "You see," says a Konkomba, "we are at a distinct disadvantage in the courts of the Dagombas; we are out of place. They don't know our customs and their laws don't help us."

The action continues. The Ya Na (played by a Konkomba) is urged to pass judgment but finds it difficult.

The real Dagombas advise him: "After consulting with my elders this is what I am going to do: I am giving you both a fine of one sheep to pay. As for the woman, take her away to my house where she will

not cause any further trouble." All laugh at the cleverness of the Ya Na in confiscating the woman.

But some Dagombas are not of the same view. "It would not be as simple as that," they say. "The Ya Na would first discuss the matter with his elders sitting there in front. He would then call the woman and ask for her view. Finally, he could fine them for causing trouble and for ignoring the woman's view; and, yes, he could take the woman as his own wife. But this is not out of selfishness or lechery." They go on to explain that each village under a chief's authority is obligated to send him a wife, establishing a link of responsibility to her family. This is to their advantage. In this way she becomes an unofficial spokesperson for her family and village. Eventually her village will have a stake in chieftaincy and her sons may rise to the level of the chieftaincy held by their father.

The Konkomba, playing the role of the Ya Na, then explains his hesitancy, "We Konkombas do not tell others what to do. Every man is to be free as God created him. I cannot presume to tell another man what to do. He would certainly understand this as a wicked attempt to take away his freedom. If he does not resist, the ancestors themselves will rise up to assert their independence and punish him."

All begin to understand the differences in their perspectives. Then the facilitators interject: "But now you are a Dagomba chief. You are not a Konkomba. Do what you must do." The Ya Na pronounces judgment and all agree to it, even the Konkombas. Great relief and a hint of pride show in his face. It is a wonderful thing to have power! The real Dagombas in the group give him a round of applause and the Konkombas are thinking: "We too could do that; we too could be chiefs. It would be a good thing."

Culture-drama is a door to discovery. Konkombas learn that chiefs are not "so bad" after all. It becomes clear that, in many ways, the Konkombas are not equipped to make use of the benefits of appeal and support that the institution of chieftaincy could provide, and they discover that many of their grievances are not so much against the system itself as against its abuses. The Dagombas, in turn, learn the full consequences of the selfish judgments made by some of their chiefs. Above all, both sides learn to trust each other.

In both systems "respect" (*jirima*) is the most important quality or virtue, but it is understood differently in each. The understanding of the Dagombas is shown in this proverb: "The chief's guinea fowl is the one in the bush" (Lange, 1998). It means that a good chief, in the name of hospitality, would be expected to give away to visitors all his household's guinea fowls, leaving only the wild guinea fowls in the "bush" for his own supper. Much of the anger of the Dagombas toward the Konkombas is based on the mistaken belief that Konkombas are not respectful to their chiefs. The "chief" scene taught both sides that what each thought about the other is not true. Each is, indeed, quite "respectful" but in very different ways.

The Market Scene

Two women, one from each group, chose the marketplace as the location for their conflict, because the market is the public arena of women. The Konkombas are mostly subsistence farmers. The men produce the "food," which includes yams and grains, while the women produce the vegetables used in making the "soup." The main meal is "TZ" (tee-zed), a kind of thick porridge of sorghum, millet or maize covered with soup.

Dagombas, on the other hand, are mostly traders. The Dagomba women traders meet the Konkomba women producers at the Konkomba markets. Together, the women set up the village market scene with great efficiency. Various market items are situated around the room—a table of tomatoes here, okra there, dried fish, rice, sorghum, beans, and so on, are all in their own corners. Konkomba women take up their positions as the sellers and Dagomba women as the buyers. Because there are not enough women a few of the men are recruited as market women selling various commodities. As soon as the action begins they change roles: Dagombas do the selling and Konkombas the buying.

The Action

A Konkomba playing a Dagomba trader starts off, "Greetings to you and the market! I hope you are fine. I like your tomatoes. How much for them?"

The Dagomba playing the role of the Konkomba seller responds saying, "They are five for 300 cedis."

"Here, get your money," says the trader. Then the order to stop the action is given by both groups.

The Konkombas say they wouldn't behave like that in real life. Rather they would say: "They are five for 500 cedis, but if you buy some I'll reduce the price and give you some extra."

The Dagombas say they wouldn't behave that way, either. They would press for a better bargain saying, "Oh! Now don't make a fuss. There are plenty of tomato sellers. Give me a good deal and I will always buy from you. Here take 400 and give me 10 tomatoes." Then they would snatch up some extra besides and put them in their basin. Finally they would say, "Take these to the truck for me. I'm going to see the rice sellers."

The Konkomba woman, who is acting as the buyer, tries but she can't bring herself to speak or act as she has been instructed. In particular, she finds it impossible to snatch up the extra tomatoes.

The Dagombas urge her on saying, "Try. Go ahead and do it."

She answers, "I can't! I just can't."

The Dagombas are amazed. "Why can't you do this? It is not difficult."

No response.

Then the Dagomba, who is acting as the Konkomba seller, offers a demonstration. She places her hands on her hips and says, "No, you can carry the tomatoes back to the truck yourself and give me the full agreed price or you will be sorry you ever came here."

Again, the real Konkombas intervene to correct her: "No. As a Konkomba you can't say that! You have to do as she says. Give everything to her and take them to the truck."

Then the Dagomba, who is playing the Konkomba seller, is dumbfounded and objects, "What do you mean? I can never do that."

The real Konkomba woman then takes on the seller's role again and shows the Dagomba woman how a Konkomba would really behave.

The Dagomba woman playing the Konkomba seller then asks, "How can you do that? Don't you respect yourself?"

The Konkomba says in reply, "This is the way we respect ourselves. If someone wants it so much you must give it to her. You shouldn't try to stop her. That is what we have been taught by the ancestors. You must allow her to be free." In both the "market scene" and the "chief scene" the Dagombas and the Konkombas found it nearly impossible to act out the role of the other. This was not because they didn't see or understand what was being asked of them but because the particular actions or behavior they were being asked to enact were simply incon-

ceivable in their own culture. Their accustomed cultural pathways literally prevented them from acting in those ways even if it was "make believe."

The resistance was challenged by a Dagomba who didn't understand why the Konkombas should suddenly "lash out" at them when they "were only doing what they always have done." For example, in the market scene, a participant insisted that the Konkombas had the chance to refuse to give the Dagombas what they wanted but they just couldn't do it. "This is only cowardice," he said. "And then later on when they suddenly turn on you, this is absolute madness."

At this point Shu confronts the man and, to his great surprise, starts pushing him, thrusting him back, again and again, until his back is against the wall. "How does this make you feel," she says, using the drama therapy technique of "action interpretation" (Johnson, Sandel, & Eicher, 1983). Finally, with his back against the wall, he pushes back. "Aha," says Shu. "Now you know how it feels to be pushed against a wall like the Konkombas have felt for centuries." He was silent after that.

The Earth Shrine Scene

At the most basic level of identity, all of Africa is divided up into thousands of territorial parcels, demarcated by rivers, mountains, forests, and natural formations, each of which is presided over by a particular "Earth Spirit" that is responsible for the fertility and well-being of all within its territorial domain. Both Dagombas and Konkombas have the same proverb stipulating the relationship that exists between this spirit and the people: "The people know the 'Earth' [Earth spirit] and the 'Earth' knows its master" (Lange, 1998).

Although non-chiefly peoples, like the Konkombas, do not have chiefs, they do have spiritual leaders who form the link between the "Earth" and the people (Froelich, 1954). When the Dagombas entered what is now the Dagomba Kingdom (Dagbon) as raiding parties from territories further north, they killed these leaders and usurped their office (Cardinall, 1920/1960; Kirby, in press). Part of the conflict concerns this disruption and its continuation in various forms up to the present time.

To set the scene, one participant locates a stone that can serve as the shrine's "altar," where sacrifices are made, and various objects

associated with "Earth" shrines, such as a clay pot and an iron bell or "gong-gong," are used to call the spirit. Dagombas play the parts of the Konkomba "Earth shrine custodian" and his elders, while the Konkombas play the role of Dagombas who are forced to go to the Konkombas to appeal to the shrine for rain.

The Action

The local Dagomba chief and elders (played by Konkombas) approach the house of the "Earth shrine custodian." "Ko, ko, ko! Knocking, knocking!"

"Who is it?" asks the custodian.

"It is Suleman, the chief of Damon."

"Oh, come in, chief. You are most welcome." Water is offered and the chief is asked his mission.

"I am here to ask for rain. All our crops are failing. We don't know what to do. Can't you intercede for us with the 'Earth' "?

The "Earth" priest (acted by a Dagomba) wears a tattered old smock. It is ludicrous in comparison to the Dagomba chief's magnificent robe. He sits on a smooth flat stone, obviously ill-at-ease playing the role, with his back up against the crumbling mud hut. He responds to the request. "Ok, I will help you. Bring me a black goat and a white fowl."

The Konkombas interject: "No as the 'Earth shrine custodian,' you must first assess the extent of the problem. You must send three men to find out from diviners exactly what is blocking the rain. It could be something simple requiring only a small sacrifice. But it could also be something very serious like 'spoiled Earth.' "

Both sides understand the meaning of "spoiled Earth." It is a condition of intense disjuncture leading to the "death" of the earth, rendering it infertile, dangerous, and unfit for cultivation or habitation. The most important cause of "spoiled Earth" is the spilling of human blood on the earth (Kirby, 1999).

All present realize that no ritual healing of the "Earth" has occurred in eastern Dagbon since the war. Worried eyes still look to the east for rain at the beginning of each rainy season. But no Dagomba dares talk about it because doing so would grant a certain prior authority to the non-chiefly Konkomba peoples whose ritual experts are in charge of the "Earth" shrine. Soon the results are in. As everyone fears, the diviners reveal that the "Earth is spoiled."

The "Earth" priest calls the Dagomba chief to hear the diviners' verdict. "Well, as you know, the diviners tell us that the 'Earth is spoiled.' This is very serious. You can't just ignore it. You must make it better. This requires a special sacrifice."

"What should we do? We are willing to do anything," say the Dagomba chief and his elders, played by Konkombas.

At this point the Konkombas intervene telling the "Earth" priest (played by a Dagomba) to say: "We must all gather at the 'Earth shrine' and perform the 'burying of the blood' ceremony." They instruct the Dagombas to sacrifice fowls and a black goat, saying that each party must bring some of the weapons that were used, especially the bows and arrows. The animals are to be sacrificed and the blood of the sacrifices will be buried along with the broken weapons of both groups. They explain that this ritual will put an end to the infertility and pollution. The "Earth" will come back to life and it will enable the people to come together as before. From this time onward, no one may ever speak of the war again. It will be as if it never happened.

Step by step they enact the ritual. This time the Konkombas, in the roles of the Dagombas, take charge. They are proactive, doing things which the Dagombas would never have thought of doing, like making a representative of each side hold the goat while it is being slaughtered. The Dagombas are full of questions which the Konkombas eagerly answer. By the end of the ceremony all feel that they actually worked together to solve their common problem.

CULTURAL TRANSFORMATION: BUILDING A NEW WORLD TOGETHER

The night before the last day of the workshop, like static electricity before a summer storm, a great euphoria filled the air. Quite spontaneously, the participants felt the need to "do something." One said, "We have been suffering too long. Let us break down the walls that separate us. Let us 'reintegrate' Yendi." Since the war no Konkomba has been allowed to live in Yendi, the main city of Dagbon. This has caused a great deal of hardship for each group.

The scene is set and the two groups switch sides. This time the Dagombas, who are playing the parts of the Konkomba leaders, are the more vocal. They start the scene by gathering all the Konkomba clan

heads and heads of the major households for a meeting in their capitol. Saboba. One speaks in behalf of the others: "We have all been suffering because we cannot go to Yendi to sell our goods, or to come and go as we please like we did before the war. Let us go to the Dagomba King and speak with him."

Immediately the "red flags" are shown by the Konkombas. "No, you can't just call a meeting like that. No Konkomba elder would come. We are all independent of one another. Calling a meeting like that is an unacceptable presumption of power."

The Dagombas, playing the parts of the Konkomba elders, are shocked into realizing that something as simple as calling a meeting, which they find extremely easy to do, is fraught with difficulties. It is almost impossible for the Konkombas. All begin to realize that the first initiative must come from the Dagombas.

The next scene is at the palace of the Ya Na, the Dagomba King. The King, played by a Konkomba, speaks to his elders thus: "You are wondering why I have called you today. It is because I want to have your advice about the Konkombas. It has been 12 years since the war. We need to improve our markets. Do you think it is time to bring the Konkombas back to Yendi?"

The Dagombas interrupt the scene, explaining to the Konkombas some of the intricacies of Dagomba diplomacy. "No, the Ya Na wouldn't do this. The initiative must come from the elders. He must feel that there is no opposition from them before he will come out with his view." Gradually, a way is found. It is one that navigates the intricacies of the Dagomba court, that organizes the Konkomba elders, that subdues other political agendas, that prevents the youth of both sides from causing trouble, and that builds up a healthy anticipation among all the people. By the end of the day all the workshop participants are literally jumping for joy.

In the final scene, step by step, they reintegrate Yendi. They are astonished at what has been accomplished. A few of them express their amazement:

> If we had the authority to do so we could integrate Yendi right now. We know exactly what we would need to do. We have looked at every angle, every potential and real danger. There were many problems we could not have anticipated. But by working together, we have gotten to know about them and have overcome them right here in this room. This is why the government is powerless. They really do not know what to do. But we know. We know how to solve our problem.

Return to the Desert Island

In the final scene, they return to the "desert island" and are asked, once more, to paint their world and what it needs. Their new masterpiece is a collage of unity. They are no longer separate—Konkombas on one side of the island and Dagombas on the other. There is a harmony of action, of colors, and in the use of spaces. There is a flow between the various services and self-portrayals. They have given symbolic expression to their newly unified "peace culture."

SOCIODRAMA AND CULTURE-DRAMA

There is a fine line separating sociodrama and culture-drama. In the understanding of the authors, and in the briefest of terms, sociodrama is to a society as culture-drama is to cultural groups. Sociodrama, as a therapeutic genre, aims to address the unhealthy, neurotic or chaotic relations of a social group (Moreno, Blomkvist, & Rutzel, 2000). It presumes a general accord or common language among the individual members of the society. Not so with culture-drama. Here, different culture groups assign different meanings to their worlds. When they come into contact with one another, the clash and mutual misinterpretations lead to conflict between them. Our so-called "culture wars" are an example of this, as are the increased ethnic and religious tensions around the world today. Culture-drama offers a way to deal with these problems.

Culture-drama uses many of the techniques and methods of psychodrama—especially role-reversal and doubling—and it follows a similar process toward integration (see Vargiu, 1977), but it is not concerned with individuals or societies as such. It is rather concerned with bridging and integrating the two or more cultures and their worldviews. It focuses on interpreting one cultural group to the other; and, in the process, opening up greater self-understanding and mutual discovery for each—especially around points of conflicting expectation. It is precisely this discovery of a conflicting point of expectation, for example, the cultural meaning of "fridge" for Africans, or "Earth shrine" for Konkombas, or

"Chief" for Dagombas, that opens the possibility of learning that different groups do have quite different worlds of meaning, that these worlds are organized, logical units, and that they are accessible and understandable. Knowing them and acting accordingly affects our relationships. Fridges are important because of water, and water is important because of the all-important rule of hospitality.

Culture-drama is, therefore, therapeutic, not simply for the individuals in a society, nor for the society itself, but for different cultures in relation to one another. It offers peoples of different cultures the possibility to consciously re-form, adapt, and change behavior in relation to our changing times and circumstances, and to the mounting friction engendered by living in close proximity to other cultures—a problem that has intensified in our global era.

In their evaluation, the participants showed their appreciation for this new approach to resolving conflicts and went back to their homes with great enthusiasm for the method, new insights into their cultures, and renewed hope for a "peace culture." All the participants came to appreciate the role culture plays in helping them to understand themselves and the other better. It helped them to begin to address the core issues beneath their feelings of enmity with the other group, to resolve these issues, and to begin new ways of living together. Furthermore, it did this in ways that were accessible to them. "We could use our own languages and ways of doing things. This made it real. The real issues came up without us thinking about them and the way we interacted let us see a new way through the problem." The enactments helped the participants learn that true peacebuilding is not just a matter of discussion and negotiations. It is also necessary for each side to experience and understand their own cultural pathways and those of the other.

But it goes a great deal further than mere understanding. When the participants traded places they actually experienced what it was like to live in the "shoes" of the other. They were able to feel the sentiments of their brothers and sisters from inside their culture and the discussions helped them to understand this. The "action insight" or dialogue of action brings about a kind of "conversion" to the perspective and world of the other. One becomes a "guest" in that world and is led around to see its beauty and grandeur, its meaning, and good sense.

Culture-drama works in the space between worldviews and it negotiates these worlds rather than individual contracts. It works to transform

the historical, social, and cultural structures at the heart of conflicts (Lederach, 1997). Instead of each side struggling with the other to score points, participants end up acting and speaking for each other. This leads to compassion, which, in turn, leads to acceptance, forgiveness, and positive action. Finally, by confirming each other in a natural give and take, participants are able to build new pathways and, in some limited but authentic ways, they actually put those transformations into practice.

In summary, the importance of culture-drama is evident in these ways:

- It is a method for discovery of one's own culture and that of the other.
- Through empathy gained in "action insight" it builds a new foundation of trust and confidence in the other group and in one's own group.
- It opens possibilities for learning and "playing" with new cultural meanings.
- It offers a hope-filled vision of a new cultural integration.
- It offers a vehicle for bringing the two groups together to build a new "peace culture."

MOVING TOWARD A "PEACE CULTURE"

The workshop in Ghana was a unique experience for everyone. Its uniqueness brought its own brand of difficulties but gradually, as the participants began to experience its integrating effects, the enthusiasm of the group increased. One participant confessed: "It took us some time to get used to the new approach, through acting, but it turned out to be much better than just thinking and talking about the issues." After getting into the act, another reported: "I feel much closer to my Dagomba brothers and sisters now because I can see and feel things that I didn't see and feel before." Another one felt that dramatizing reversed roles helped her to see the issues more clearly. She said, "We could actually feel the sentiments of the other party. The drama helped us to say and do things we couldn't have said or done back at home. This has brought us closer together." It is our hope that in our converging world with diverging cultural meanings culture-drama can bring us all closer together.

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