

# Boubacar Souleyman

## Interview in Fulfulde

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<p><b>Midó yidi mi haalana on no ngardu-mi he leydi ndi.</b></p>	<p>I would like to tell you how I grew up in this country.</p>
<p><b>No laatorii-mi jimoowo.</b></p>	<p>How I became a singer.</p>
<p><b>Miin, mi wanaa jimoowo, mi tawaay jimi he suudu amin.</b></p>	<p>Myself, I'm not a singer, I didn't inherit songs from our family.</p>
<p><b>Ka, nden, wuro amin too,</b></p>	<p>Neither, back in the day, in our village.</p>
<p><b>Suka jokolle fuu no woowi fiyide nduu kuntigiiru* ndu ji'ata nduu.</b></p>	<p>All young men would play this kuuntigiiru that you see here. <i>*Kuntigiiru: coming from the Zarma "kuntigi," the Fulani add the suffix -iiru to help it resonate with the Fulfulde language. It is a monochord instrument.</i></p>
<p><b>YogaaBe FulBe mbi'a kuntigi, yogaaBe mbi'a mooliyaaru*.</b></p>	<p>Some Fulani call it a kuntigi some people call is mooliyaaru. <i>*Mooliyaaru: coming from the Zarma "moolo," the Fulani add the suffix -iyaaru to help it resonate with the Fulfulde language. The mollo is another string instrument with a longer body with 3 strings that is the ancestor of the banjo. Some may simply call any string instrument a mollo.</i></p>
<p><b>FulBe Mali kay mbi'ata naa dum na jurkele.</b></p>	<p>The Fulani in Mali call it "jurkele."</p>
<p><b>Ayyo, to, nduu min mboowi wakaati leelewal; dum laatanake min fa hono... fa fulBe na mbi'a jaati "ndaare fijo, ndaaron leelewal".</b></p>	<p>Ok, so this is what we were used to, during the full moon, when the Fulani will even say, "look there at the full moon."</p>
<p><b>Nde leelewal woni, wakkati muum non fijo woni.</b></p>	<p>During the full moon, it's the time for enjoying oneself.</p>

**Wakkati leelewal, surbaaƙe he jokolƙe no wurto no piya kuntigiiru, no piya tummbule, no piya sereeeji, no njima, no mboma.**

During the full moon, the young girls and boys come out and play the kuntigi, playing calabashes, playing the flute, singing and dancing.

**Non woni ko ekkitirii-mi piyide kuntigiiru nduu'en ndu nji'ata.**

That's how I learned to play kuntigi you see.

**Mi fuddiri mido fiya illa hitaande annasaara no wi'ee 1976, puɗɗu-mi fiyide kuntigi.**

I started playing since the European year 1976, (that's when) I started the kuntigi.

**Miin, mido woodi hannden duubi capande jowi he jowi.**

Myself, I am 55 years old.

**Capande jowi he jowi, mi wanaa suka, Allah anndi ko aduna!**

55 years old, I'm no child, only God knows one's destiny.

**Mi wanaa suka, mi mawɗo, mi baaligi.**

I'm not young, I'm an adult, a grown man.

**Ayo, mi fuddii fiyude kuntigi illa ley sukaaku am so goonga.**

So, I started playing the kuntigi from my childhood in all truth.

**Illa hitaande tuubaako no wi'ee 1976 puɗɗu-mi fiyude kuntigi.**

Ever since the European year known as 1976, I started playing the kuntigi.

**Aya, fiyo min mboowi wafude dum.**

Yea, we used to have regular parties.

**Nden, tawaana himbe keewaa naafikaaku, himbe keewaa ganyal-ganyalaaku.**

Also, it was a time when people were not very likely to be hypocritical, nor likely to be hateful.

**Himbe fuu gollidan non, himbe fuu kawran non, himbe fuu mbeltoro.**

They were working all the time, everyone would come together, all would share in the joy.

**Minen fulbe he haaƙe fuu min njoodidii.**

We the Fulani, with the Songhai, we lived together.

**Sabaabu mum jaati wafi ko miin, inna am oo, o pullo; abba am duu o kaado.**

This is the reason that as for me, my mother is Fulani and my father was Songhai.

**Hanaa a yi'ii na, mi senngo pullo, mi senngo kaado.**

So you see, I am half Fulani and half Songhai.

**Se hanaa ko hanaa fulbe he haaBe njoodidii, dum hebataa laataade. On paamii na?**

If it were not that the Fulani and Zarma were living together, this would never be possible. You understand right?

**Pullo waawataa taarafi kaado, kaado demoowo non.**

A Fulani (man) would never marry a Songhai, the Songhai are agriculturalists.

**Se nii a wi'ii demoowo duu, a haalii habare cobbal.**

And when we talk about agriculturalists we are talking about (millet) porridge.

**Se a wi'ii cobbal duu, a haalii habare kosam. Say kosam naata ley cobbal so cobbal ngal wela, lemsino dow demngal. A fahami na ?**

And when you say porridge, you will talk about milk. The milk must be added to the porridge otherwise it's not good, so that it (becomes) delicious for the tongue. Do you understand?

**Say duroowo dura, bira, kosam heBee, nebam heBee, so watee ley nyiiri, himBe nyaama, nden ndakam nyiiri mbi'a ana weli.**

It's only when a herder takes the animals to pasture that he'll get milk, he'll get butter, that will be added to a meal to eat, it's only like this that we can call a meal delicious.

**Ayo, dum wadi ko fulbe he haaBe no njoodidino, Be kawranno Be fuu iBe kiira nokkure wootere.**

Yea, this is why the Fulani and the Zarma-Songhai live together, they come together in the evening to relax together.

**Ayo, ton non kebu-mi joon kay jimi fulbe nanat'a mido yima. Ton non kebu-mi yoga jimi haabe dii fuu di nanat'a mido yima.**

So, this where the Fulani song that you heard me sing comes from. That is also where the Songhai song that I sang comes from too.

**Nden, nde pamduno-mi, sukaaku am, mi nanataano fey haabeere, so Allah wi'i kam haalane goonga.**

Also, when I was younger, in my childhood, I did not understand Songhai at all, God has said to speak the truth.

**Mi nanataano fey he haabeere; Fulfulde tan nananno-mi.**

I didn't understand any Songhai at all; I could only understand Fulfulde.

**Dum wadi ko jimi haabe keewdi ngon, diga mi waawataa yimde dum en, sabu mi nanataano ko Be mbi'ata.**

This is why even though there are many Songhai songs, I couldn't sing them because I couldn't understand what they were saying.

**Ayo, hannden mido nana haabeere, mido nana fulfulde; mi kaado mi pullo.**

So, today I understand Songhai-Zarma, I understand Fulfulde, I am Fulani and I am Zarma.

**Ayo, to ga yeewtere am haafi. Salli alaa sayyidinaa Muhammadu. Jam nyallu.**

Ok, I'll stop my talk there. May peace be to the prophet Muhamed. Have a good day.

**Ayo, hoddu ndu nji'ata he junngo am nduu, yogaabe no mbi'a dum kuntigi, yogaabe no mbi'a dum mooliyaaru.**

So, this lute that you see in my hands, some call it kuntigi others call it mooliyarou.

**Fulbe Mali no mbi'a dum jurkele.**

The Fulani in Mali call it jourkele.

**No ndu wadir'a woni; nden mbii-mi, wanaa hannden.**

In terms of how to make it, I will talk about back in the day, not about today.

**Nden, tumbugel himbe kowoyta, so kippa he mum nguru nagge.**

Back then, we take a small calabash, then we cover it with cowhide.

**Nguru nagge duu to tukkoyta he endi nagge ngee too, ton woni to tekkaa sanne he nguru ngun.**

The cow hide that is used is the part that is by the udders, that's where the skin is not so hard.

**Ton non woni to tekkaa sanne he nguru ngun, kanyum wadata mooliyaaru ko nji'at'a.**

This is the part of the skin that isn't too hard, which is what allows one to use it for the mooliyaaru like you see.

**Kanyum be tay'ata, be kippa he tumbugel, leggal be ngatta hen, be kooy'a boggol.**

That is what we cut, what we cover over the calabash, then we use a stick and we would find a string.

**Nden, ko wanaa hannden mbii-mi koy!**

Back then, not today, I'm telling you clearly!

**Nden duu wanaa iri dii boggi non; nden hono ina wi'ee gaacol. Gaacol hooy'etee so watee.**

Back then, it wasn't a fishing line or string either, back then we would sometimes use something like a case. Sometimes we would use a case.

**Aya hannden, a yi'ii nduu, en ngattii faa he... mbi'en dum tuubaako jeyi, ndu jeyaakano nden.**

Yea, today, you see this one, we have even put...we could say that it's westernized, this type didn't exist before.

**Joon a hooy'an hono boggol nguru, so kaBB'a he gaasol ngol, kaBB'a doo, a fahami na, tinno-daa ada fiya.**

Now, you just take a piece of leather, you attach it to a case, you tie it underneath, you understand, and you start playing it.

**Tummbude, ana yaawa helude. To, nde semmbina! Nde min nji'uno hono dñi "booteeji", hono "kommbisiiji" ñi nji'ata dñi, njamndi non.**

**Njamndi ana ñuri tummbude tekkude, njamndi yaawataa helude, tummbude no yaawa helude.**

**Illa nde min nji'uno njamndi ndi, miden mbaawi wañude hoddu amin dow njamndi ndi, min tawi wallaahi ana laato jaati, ana weli duu, ana woodi.**

**Aya, ñum wañi ko illa nden min celii hippude nguru ngu dow tummbugel, min tinnii miden kippa dow njamndi, dow "kommbisi", minen mbi'ata "kommbisi".**

**Min ngatta hen leggal, ñum duu hono poodol ñoggol ngol ana no balli sanne, yaafii sanne ñurude hono nde ngattu-ña ñoggel nguru hen, ko aña fooda, foodataako.**

**Wakkati fuu aña wi'a a foodan faa njottin'a to njidu-ña, yolkito, warta to a yidaa.**

**Illa min kebi "meekanikkiiji" tuubaako ñee, illa min kebi ñi, min tawi wallaahi ndaa hono fooduki ñoggol ngol ana laafii.**

**So ngol foodake duu, ngol dartii jimnda... Nii min mbattiti joon kay miden ngaña "meekanikkiiji" annasaaraabe.**

**Faa mi fiyana on joonin kay jurukel am seeda.**

A calabash, it breaks very easily. Ok, it's not very resistant! We found that these cans called "booteeji" or "kommbisiiji," are sardine cans that are metallic.

The metal is longer lasting than the calabash, the metal doesn't break easily, the calabash breaks easily.

Since we started finding metal, we were able to use it to make our lute, we found that it's good and practical, it sounds good and it's good-looking.

So, this is why we no longer make it with leather (from a cow's udder) and a calabash, we make it using metal, with sardine cans, that we call "kombissi."

We put in the stick, there also, pulling the (plastic) string becomes easier, because when you use the leather strap (to hold the string in place), when you pull them, it doesn't stretch.

Every time you pull to get to the length you need, it loosens up, it goes back to the same place (you started) which you don't want.

Ever since we found this mechanic from the Europeans, ever since we found that, we have seen that pulling the string is more effective (this way).

Because (otherwise) just as you pull it well, it falls back and does not hold...so that's why we changed it and we use the mechanical piece from the Europeans.

To this day, I keep playing my little lute.

**Mi fiyana on "Seygalaare\*" hen.**

I will play a tune that's called, "Seygalâre".  
\*Seygalaare : This is the music from one of the great epic legends, the story of Hambodédjo Hamadi Yéli Pâté (King of the Kounâri, Mali). This was the music played for the recitation of his epic by Ko Bira Ko, his official griot.

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