

Dambe: The Renaissance of Traditional Nigerian Boxing

By Thomas Green

Since the 1950s, Nigerian boxers have held their own (and often far better than their own) in international boxing competition. Examples include Hogan "Kid" Basse (born Okon Basse Asuquo), who won the world featherweight championship in 1957, and Dick Tiger (born Richard Ihetu), who won a succession of middleweight and light heavyweight boxing titles between 1962 and 1966.

Such success may be due in part to the role that indigenous boxing and wrestling plays in the culture of this West African nation. One such pugilistic art is Dambe, a traditional boxing game of the Hausa people of the Saharan regions of West Africa. In Northern Nigeria, for example, Ado Dan Kware, Dan Dunawa "Gundumi", Ali Zuma, Balbalin Bala I, and especially "Shago," the most famous Dambe athlete of all time, are athletic heroes -- and for good reason. Dambe is an especially rugged striking art utilizing fists, feet, and head. Occasionally a fist covering has been dipped in ground glass, and *damben karfe* continues to be practiced, albeit illegally. (*Damben karfe* means "iron boxing" and refers to its hand-held punching implement, a *mazagi*, shaped roughly like a small trowel protruding from the striking hand.)

The origins of Dambe are lost in antiquity, but its most thorough historian (in English), Edward Powe, notes that "the single bound fist and salute in dambe... bears a remarkable resemblance" to images of Egyptian boxers of the Classical period. Yet, despite this potentially venerable history, Dambe is virtually unknown outside continental Africa. Soon this will change, if Carambe Jarimi (born Ibrahim Yahuza) has anything to say about it. [EN1] Carambe's goal is to bring Hausa boxing arts to the world, and he approaches the task with evangelical zeal.

So, what is Dambe? The following remarks on the historic Dambe tradition draw extensively on Edward L. Powe's *Combat Games of Northern Nigeria*, which is the most comprehensive coverage of Hausa martial arts in English. (This and Dr. Powe's other works are available from Dan Aiki Press.)

Traditional Dambe Boxing

Historically, Dambe was a Hausa martial sport that took place at the village level. Matches were held on festival occasions, and the art was the special province of members of the butchers' guild. Originally a means of practicing military skills (Carambe, e-mail, 5/19/05), today guild members use the game as a means of demonstrating masculinity, accruing personal prestige, and bringing honor to one's family and village (Powe 20). While the art in contemporary practice would seem to have little applicability to field combat, beyond developing physical strength and instilling courage in competitors, certain elements of the modern game allude to a more combative ancestry.

For example, Dambe uses only the dominant hand to strike, while the "weaker" hand is extended toward the opponent and used to ward off blows. Hence, the lead hand represents a shield. In fact, the dominant hand is referred to as "spear," while the other is labeled the "shield." {EN2} Grasping and grappling is used to permit a strike with the more powerful hand, which in turn may represent what one does when one's shield is broken. In addition, Dambe competitions are held between groups ("armies") who meet in dueling pairs on a symbolic battlefield, and the metaphor of warfare is apparent in the continuing use of the term "killing" to signify the strike that leads to winning a match.

Individual Dambe matches consist of a series of combats between individual pairs of opponents who, Powe notes, are customarily evenly matched in size. However, as there are no weight classes in the sense of European style boxing, contemporary professional Dambe matches may legally pit "bantamweights" (118 pounds) against "heavyweights" (190 lbs. and above) (Carambe, e-mail, 5-26-05).

Dambe boxers can strike anywhere on the body with the fist, head, or feet. As noted above, only one fist (whether the right or left depends on the fighter's dominant hand) is used to strike. This hand, balled into a fist, is wrapped in a length of cloth called a *kara* over which is bound a knotted cord called a *zare*. Powe alludes to a tradition of sometimes dipping this knotted cord in ground glass (22).

As the opponents stand in a knees-flexed ready position, the bound hand is extended well to the rear in preparation for delivering clubbing blows to the opponent. The front hand is held fingers spread with the palm facing the opponent as a "shield" (cf. Powe 20). This hand may be used to grab and hold the opponent's head in preparation for a strike (Carambe, interview 5-24-05). Likewise, in his description of a modern match, Uthman Abubakar writes of the Dambe player standing, "with the open fist [the shielding hand] shaking mischievously to grab the wrist or hook the fingers of his opponent."

Traditionally, the lead leg (the left in the case of a right-handed boxer) was wrapped by a chain extending from ankle to knee. Known as *akayau*, this could be used as a weapon when kicking. Nonetheless, kicks could be executed with either foot. Although the use of the *akayau* has been abandoned in contemporary Dambe boxing, Carambe notes that there is still a preferred kicking leg that is often wrapped in cloth for protection.

Although specific descriptions of the kicking repertoire do not exist in the ethnographic literature, Powe does mention the fighter Dan Cana ("Son of China"), so-called because "he likes to kick as in karate" (31). Carambe, a former competitor in the Korean martial art of taekwondo (Nigerian National Taekwondo Championships 1992, 1993, and 1994) provides support for this. He compares the modern kicking style to the Korean art's front, side, crescent, and axe kicks. He adds, however, that Dambe combatants rarely use the roundhouse kick (interview 5-19-05).

The goal in Dambe is to deliver a single "fatal" blow (*kwab daya*), meaning one that causes the opponent's hand or knee to touch the ground (or, even better, knocks him flat to the ground) (Powe 20). In keeping with the idea of a "fatal" blow, this latter is called "killing" the opponent (Abubakar). The concept of the single "killing" blow that "has been maintained in all forms of modern Dambe and [is one of the elements that] makes the art distinct from western boxing" (Carambe, e-mail 5-18-05).

Matches are scheduled for three rounds. A round ends when there is a long period of inactivity, a boxer's hand binding becomes loose, or either fighter "voluntarily breaks his

fighting stance" (Powe 20). In traditional boxing, matches take place in the cleared *dandali* ("battlefield", or arena, Powe 18), meaning a cleared space inside a village, surrounded by a circle of spectators.

As is a general rule with African martial events, percussive music accompanies Dambe bouts. In this case, there is a battery of Hausa drums consisting of the primary *kalangu* (double-membraned, hourglass-shaped, drums hung from the shoulder of the drummer) and secondary drums, notably the smaller *kuntuku*. The drums are employed to play the *take* (individualized summons for the boxers). The following lyrics recorded by Powe (31) are representative

Audu na `Yan Lilo; ka maida maza mata!

"Audu from the town of 'Yan Lilo; make men cower as women!"

Drums also accompany the *kirari* (praise chants) delivered both before and after the matches. The following is an excerpt from a *kirari* sung in honor of the fighter Shago (Powe 28)

I am iron ore, the follower of the Ruler;

A dried spiced jerky made from the meat of a black dog;

Whoever eats me will awaken in Heaven or Hell;

Son of Audu, there is always room for more in Heaven and Hell

You play the drums and I kill;

Even if they number one thousand, I shall slay them;

Trees are food for the elephant;

If one refuses to kill/eat, one awakens with hunger;

Let those who dare, come battle with me.

Although the matches proper are not accompanied by music, the musicians may turn their talents to making commentary on the action of the matches (Abubakar).

Dambe is also noted for its use of supernatural "medicines." These medicines most often take the form of physical items such as amulets, and they are used to protect against and/or inflict various types of physical or psychological damage. [EN3] According to Carambe (interview 5-26-05)

You cannot separate medicine and traditional boxing on whatever level, because not only traditional boxing, but in all traditional forms of martial art, charms are used because there is so much belief in the use of charms to protect the wearer of that charm or have victory over his opponent. They call it sa'a [SAH' ah], to achieve victory over our opponent with the use of traditional charms...

Anything we do, we tend to seek protection from the ritualist. Ritualists are known as boka [BO-kah, Hausa, "holy man" or "person able to channel supernatural power"]. So that the charm used as protection... [The charm may] also witch or confuse an opponent.

We cannot [openly use charms in amateur competition] inasmuch as we know that there are laws that have banned the use of charms. Believe you me, most of the times we tend to smuggle the charms into the area without even the organizers noticing.

The amulets may be clenched in the striking hand, or wrapped inside the kara. Power-laden objects also may be attached to other parts of the body. The various types of physical amulets are classified as different types according to where they are worn. An amulet in the form of a necklace is called *laaya* (LAH-ya) (Carambe, interview 5-26-05). The *kambu* (kam-BU) is worn on the arm, as in the amulets worn on the arms of the competitors in most published photos (Carambe, interview 5-19-05). The *guru* (gu-RU) is worn suspended from the waist.

Asked what the bundles contained, Carambe replied (interview 5-26-05)

At times they [the contents of these bundles] are concoctions. And at times they are amulets and at times they are skins of animals that have been sacrificed for rituals... animal parts [are]...used by the boka. There are verses from the Holy Qur'an. Other times there is ritual as given by Islamic scholars. Ritual acts. Your mullah [mallam, Hausa; Islamic scholar] would tell you to recite verses from the Holy Qur'an a certain number of times, like seven times or eight times for a certain number of days, and maybe at times he'll tell you to fast like three days. There are some boxers who even go to the extent of even going to the graveyard and dipping their boxing hand into the grave. They'll sleep overnight in the graveyard. So some boxers go to that extent. On the advice of their boka they go to the graveyard. He will tell them to go and dip in their hand into the grave and tell them they will have to pass the night over. Or he will tell them they should box on a particular day and at a particular hour and come to the dandali [fighting area] from the particular direction that would give them victory over their opponent. So that has been the practice.

Modern Dambe Boxing

As trainer and coach, Carambe represents both old and new directions for traditional Nigerian martial arts. Carambe became the student of Inda Dan Nupawa at the age of nine and later trained under Dan Ummaru. In Dambe, he competed in top venues between 1980 and 1996, attaining a professional Dambe record of 29 wins and 7 losses. He took first place at the Latai Dambe contest held in Gumel in 1988, and he competed six times at Kano City's Kings Garden Club. He also competed in finals in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno state. This overlapped with his period of active competition in both traditional wrestling (*Kokawa*), which he did from 1987-1990 (he was in the national championships

in 1989) and international taekwondo, which he did from 1990-1996. Meanwhile, he entered Bayero University to pursue a degree in Physical and Health Education. On completion of his university study with a B.Sc. in 2001, he became a coach and established his own training facility, the Afromartial Club in Kano City, Nigeria. Here he teaches not only Dambe, but also other traditional arts such as Kokawa and *Shadi*--which Edward L. Powe characterizes as a mutual flogging competition in which two opponents test one another's ability to withstand blows by exchanging series of three strikes with a stick (e-mail 9-30-2005).

The workout schedule maintained by the athletes at Carambe's Afromartial Club is designed to suit the needs of players engaged in regular competition. The training is intensive and held twice daily five days a week.

In terms of drills and exercises, Carambe notes, "There are specialized training methods peculiar to these [Hausa] arts." He gives two representative examples that relate to Dambe's specific goal of delivering a one-handed blow to the head that knocks down and defeats the opponent. A means of "strengthening the head" (and its "shock-absorber," the neck) is "doing push-ups with the head" an exercise that Carambe compares to the neck bridges practiced by wrestlers. One-handed push-ups on a single finger strengthen the punching hand and arm. In addition, Carambe draws on his academic degree and practical experience in taekwondo to develop conditioning methods similar to the ones found in Asian or European martial arts for his trainees and himself. Says Carambe (interview 5-24-05)

I was lucky to go to university, because most Dambe players do not have even secondary education, so we [most players] adopted outdated methods and forms of training... With my university education, I was able to design efficient training programs. And with my past experience and my knowledge it makes it easy for me to impart my experiences to my students. I am also able to analyze and map out strategy for myself and my students... And also I can begin to see hidden talent in a player. I can spot that player and see a future champion.

However, in common with most teachers of traditional martial arts, the problem for Carambe is how to interest young people in traditional martial arts. True, the Nigerian government patronizes many sports, and sponsors a biannual sport festival. The emphasis, though, is on international rather than traditional sport. In the words of top-ranked Dambe competitor Umaru Adamu ("Shago dan Basharawa"), "Dambe is a traditional Nigerian sport. The government does nothing for us, but in other countries, the governments encourage indigenous sports" ("Traditional Butchers").

Directions

Today, Dambe is undergoing a renaissance. The fact that Dambe as well as Kokawa have been featured in international African sports festivals such as the All African Games of 2003 held in Nigeria and have been proposed as events again for the 2007 All African Games in Algeria attests to this. Nigerian professional fight promoters such as Iliya Isa

see growth in the professional ranks as well, to the extent that, "We believe it could be taken up overseas" ("Traditional Butchers").

Inevitably, however, internationalization has wrought changes on traditional sport. Carambe notes that the Traditional Sports Federation of Nigeria has introduced the following modifications into Dambe.

The use of the head has been forbidden in amateur events, but it is allowed in professional events. Also, in amateur events only the kara (cloth strip) is allowed to be tied to the hand, and the use of injurious material such as glass and the zare (knotted string) is not allowed. The akayau was used only in the old days [but not in either amateur or professional bouts now] (Carambe, e-mail, 5-18-05).

Another modification is in the fighting attire. Contemporary urban fighters wear shorts rather than the traditional *warki* (loincloth) (Carambe, interview, 5-19-05). Also, Dambe in its urban incarnation is now performed in enclosed areas such as "stadiums, a square, an enclosure, or a round place in the professional form of the art, but the amateur contest is played in a circular arena of a ten meter radius" (Carambe, e-mail, 5-18-05). A news item in the *Pakistani Daily Times* describes one playing area as "a rough patch of earth behind a bottling factory in Lagos, watched over by 2,000 fans" ("Traditional Butchers").

In an effort to make Dambe a purely sporting activity in which the athletes of other nations can compete on an equal and purely physical basis, the use of medicines has now been banned in the amateur ranks. But, Carambe observes (e-mail, 5-26-05)

Here in Nigeria if you are an amateur, like in the National Sports Festival, the rules say you [the officials] must not see any charms on your body. [Competitors respond to this rule by using medicines in ways that insure] there is no physical manifestation of the charm...and inasmuch as the charm is not physically seen on your body, you are free to use it.

Charms may be swallowed, given as an herbal preparation, administered to a competitor by means of a "smoke bath," or via the ritual acts preceding matches. The charms and associated rituals are the province of no single belief system, but may be associated with Islam, Christianity, indigenous Hausa religion or any other belief subscribed to by the boxer (Carambe, e-mail, 5-26-05).

Hausa are of course not the only African people to use charms in the ring. For example, there are recent South African bans against all sangomas (diviner priests in the tradition of the Nguni-speaking peoples), *umthakathis* ("witch"), *juju* (magical/spiritual power) men, and other spiritual advisors (Blewett). Similarly, in 2005, a championship wrestling match in Lukasa, Zambia, was halted when Lubandi Mamba Mulozi "entered the ring covered in white powder and carrying charms" (Gondwe). However, such bans have yet to affect professional Dambe competitors. Says Carambe (interview, 5-26-05), "In a professional event, they [charms, amulets, etc.] are seen. They are worn all over the bodies of the boxers. You can see them in their hands. You can see them all around their waists or around their neck..."

As more Nigerians move overseas, Dambe is also developing an international following. Says Carambe, "Dambe is one of the most popular combative sports in Africa. It has been sought in the U.K. and Japan. On a daily basis, I receive inquiries from Canada, the

United States, Japan and other non-African nations." In speaking of his personal goals, Carambe gave the following response, "To see that Dambe become an international sport like Judo, Taekwondo, or Karate and to see it as a competition in the World Games and the Olympics. It is my dream to accomplish this goal and to be one of the founding fathers who make the first effort of bringing Dambe to the world community" (e-mail, 5-18-05).

So, while realizing the inevitability of change, Carambe sees himself as an agent to preserve a revered tradition. "The Hausa arts I teach have a lot to offer in terms of the promotion and development of African ancestral sports, in the preservation of African arts in general, and above all in letting the rest of the world know about the true African heritage as distinct from images that do not truly represent African culture" (5-19-05).

Endnotes

[EN1] In Nigeria, most traditional martial artists have names given to them by their fans or villages. For successful athletes, this name eventually supersedes the original name. Therefore, subsequent citations will list Carambe ("warrior") rather than Yahuza.

[EN2] This shield and spear aspect is literal rather than figurative in *damben karfe*, with its iron-armed striking hand and glove-like shield (*matashi*) held in the warding hand. See Powe 22-23.

[EN3] The longstanding use of medicine in combat sport is corroborated in Hausa folktales such as "The Woman with Two Skins," collected by Elphinstone Dayrell. As illustrated in this excerpt from the folktale, the Water Ju Ju's power is used to assure victory in wrestling

[T]he Water Ju Ju told the king's son, who had become very strong, and was very like to his father in appearance, that he should go and wrestle, and that no one would be able to stand up before him....

On the day of the match the Water Ju Ju told the king's son that he need not be in the least afraid, and that his Ju Ju was so powerful, that even the strongest and best wrestlers in the country would not be able to stand up against him for even a few minutes. All the people of the country came to see the great contest, to the winner of which the king had promised to present prizes of cloth and money, and all the strongest men came. When they saw the king's son, whom nobody knew, they laughed and said, "Who is this small boy? He can have no chance against us." But when they came to wrestle, they very soon found that they were no match for him."

These beliefs are not limited to the Hausa, as the discussions in the body of this article of the bans against spiritual advisors in South Africa and reactions against wrestlers' charms in Zambia demonstrate. Moreover, this effect is not limited to combat sports, as *The Times of Zambia* (2005) reports, "The Confederation of African Football (CAF) have banned "team advisors," otherwise known as witchdoctors, from any role within teams

competing in the African Nations Cup.... Countries that in the past have employed so-called "wisemen" include Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Cameroun, Congo, Togo, Ivory Coast and Zambia."

Works Cited/Sources

Abubakar, Uthman. (2005) "Dambe: Professionalising a Traditional Sport," allAfrica_com Nigeria [column] Dambe Professionalising a Traditional Sport.htm [originally published in Abuja *Daily Trust*, May 24, 2005]

Blewett, Bert. (2005) "Vabaza, Makepula Top the Bill" South African *Sunday Tribune*, February 20, 2005
<http://www.sundaytribune.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=245&fArticleId=2417592>

Dayrell, Elphinstone. (1910) *Folk Stories from Southern Nigeria West Africa*. Longmans, Green and Company. <http://www.public-domain-content.com/books/africa/fssn/fsn05.shtml>

Gondwe, Kennedy. (2005) "Wrestlers Get to Grips with Muti," BBC News: World Edition. February 8, 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4247561.stm>

Powe, Edward. (1994) *Black Martial Arts Volume I: Combat Games of Northern Nigeria*. Madison, WI: Dan Aiki Publications

_____. E-mail correspondence 9-30-2005.

"Traditional Butchers' Boxing Is Reborn." (2002) *Pakistani Daily Times*, April 25, 2002
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_25-4-2002_pg2_7

"Witchdoctors Banned from Nations Cup." (2005) *The Times of Zambia*.
<http://www.times.co.zm/news/viewnews.cgi?category=17&id=1011293702>

Yahuza, Ibrahim (Carambe Jarimi). E-mail correspondence 5/18/05, 5/19/05, 5/26/05

_____. Telephone interviews 5/19/05, 5/24/05, 5/26/05

</x-html>

No virus found in this incoming message.

Checked by AVG Anti-Virus.

Version: 7.0.344 / Virus Database: 267.10.18/89 - Release Date: 9/2/2005

The workout schedule maintained by the athletes at Carambe's Afromartial Club is designed to suit the needs of players engaged in regular competition. The training is intensive and held twice daily five days a week.

In terms of drills and exercises, Carambe notes, "There are specialized training methods peculiar to these [Hausa] arts." He gives two representative examples that relate to Dambe's specific goal of delivering a one-handed blow to the head that knocks down and defeats the opponent. A means of "strengthening the head" (and its "shock-absorber," the neck) is "doing push-ups with the head" an exercise that Carambe compares to the neck bridges practiced by wrestlers. One-handed push-ups on a single finger strengthen the punching hand and arm. In addition, Carambe draws on his academic degree and practical experience in taekwondo to develop conditioning methods similar to the ones found in Asian or European martial arts for his trainees and himself. Says Carambe (interview 5-24-05)

I was lucky to go to university, because most Dambe players do not have even secondary education, so we [most players] adopted outdated methods and forms of training... With my university education, I was able to design efficient training programs. And with my past experience and my knowledge it makes it easy for me to impart my experiences to my students. I am also able to analyze and map out strategy for myself and my students... And also I can begin to see hidden talent in a player. I can spot that player and see a future champion.

However, in common with most teachers of traditional martial arts, the problem for Carambe is how to interest young people in traditional martial arts. True, the Nigerian government patronizes many sports, and sponsors a biannual sport festival. The emphasis, though, is on international rather than traditional sport. In the words of top-ranked Dambe competitor Umaru Adamu ("Shago dan Basharawa"), "Dambe is a traditional Nigerian sport. The government does nothing for us, but in other countries, the governments encourage indigenous sports" ("Traditional Butchers").

Directions

Today, Dambe is undergoing a renaissance. The fact that Dambe as well as Kokawa have been featured in international African sports festivals such as the All African Games of 2003 held in Nigeria and have been proposed as events again for the 2007 All African Games in Algeria attests to this. Nigerian professional fight promoters such as Iliya Isa see growth in the professional ranks as well, to the extent that, "We believe it could be taken up overseas" ("Traditional Butchers").

Inevitably, however, internationalization has wrought changes on traditional sport. Carambe notes that the Traditional Sports Federation of Nigeria has introduced the following modifications into Dambe.

The use of the head has been forbidden in amateur events, but it is allowed in professional events. Also, in amateur events only the kara (cloth strip)

is allowed to be tied to the hand, and the use of injurious material such as glass and the zare (knotted string) is not allowed. The akayau was used only in the old days [but not in either amateur or professional bouts now] (Carambe, e-mail, 5-18-05).

Another modification is in the fighting attire. Contemporary urban fighters wear shorts rather than the traditional *warki* (loincloth) (Carambe, interview, 5-19-05). Also, Dambe in its urban incarnation is now performed in enclosed areas such as "stadiums, a square, an enclosure, or a round place in the professional form of the art, but the amateur contest is played in a circular arena of a ten meter radius" (Carambe, e-mail, 5-18-05). A news item in the *Pakistani Daily Times* describes one playing area as "a rough patch of earth behind a bottling factory in Lagos, watched over by 2,000 fans" ("Traditional Butchers").

In an effort to make Dambe a purely sporting activity in which the athletes of other nations can compete on an equal and purely physical basis, the use of medicines has now been banned in the amateur ranks. But, Carambe observes (e-mail, 5-26-05)

Here in Nigeria if you are an amateur, like in the National Sports Festival, the rules say you [the officials] must not see any charms on your body. [Competitors respond to this rule by using medicines in ways that insure] there is no physical manifestation of the charm...and inasmuch as the charm is not physically seen on your body, you are free to use it.

Charms may be swallowed, given as an herbal preparation, administered to a competitor by means of a "smoke bath," or via the ritual acts preceding matches. The charms and associated rituals are the province of no single belief system, but may be associated with Islam, Christianity, indigenous Hausa religion or any other belief subscribed to by the boxer (Carambe, e-mail, 5-26-05).

Hausa are of course not the only African people to use charms in the ring. For example, there are recent South African bans against all sangomas (diviner priests in the tradition of the Nguni-speaking peoples), *umthakathis* ("witch"), *juju* (magical/spiritual power) men, and other spiritual advisors (Blewett). Similarly, in 2005, a championship wrestling match in Lukasa, Zambia, was halted when Lubandi Mamba Mulozi "entered the ring covered in white powder and carrying charms" (Gondwe). However, such bans have yet to affect professional Dambe competitors. Says Carambe (interview, 5-26-05), "In a professional event, they [charms, amulets, etc.] are seen. They are worn all over the bodies of the boxers. You can see them in their hands. You can see them all around their waists or around their neck..."

As more Nigerians move overseas, Dambe is also developing an international following. Says Carambe, "Dambe is one of the most popular combative sports in Africa. It has been sought in the U.K. and Japan. On a daily basis, I receive inquiries from Canada, the United States, Japan and other non-African nations." In speaking of his personal goals, Carambe gave the following response, "To see that Dambe become an international sport like Judo, Taekwondo, or Karate and to see it as a competition in the World Games and the Olympics. It is my dream to accomplish this goal and to be one of the founding fathers who make the first effort of bringing Dambe to the world community" (e-mail, 5-18-05).

So, while realizing the inevitability of change, Carambe sees himself as an agent to preserve a revered tradition. "The Hausa arts I teach have a lot to offer in terms of the

promotion and development of African ancestral sports, in the preservation of African arts in general, and above all in letting the rest of the world know about the true African heritage as distinct from images that do not truly represent African culture" (5-19-05).

Endnotes

[EN1] In Nigeria, most traditional martial artists have names given to them by their fans or villages. For successful athletes, this name eventually supersedes the original name. Therefore, subsequent citations will list Carambe ("warrior") rather than Yahuza.

[EN2] This shield and spear aspect is literal rather than figurative in *damben karfe*, with its iron-armed striking hand and glove-like shield (*matashi*) held in the warding hand. See Powe 22-23.

[EN3] The longstanding use of medicine in combat sport is corroborated in Hausa folktales such as "The Woman with Two Skins," collected by Elphinstone Dayrell. As illustrated in this excerpt from the folktale, the Water Ju Ju's power is used to assure victory in wrestling

[T]he Water Ju Ju told the king's son, who had become very strong, and was very like to his father in appearance, that he should go and wrestle, and that no one would be able to stand up before him....

On the day of the match the Water Ju Ju told the king's son that he need not be in the least afraid, and that his Ju Ju was so powerful, that even the strongest and best wrestlers in the country would not be able to stand up against him for even a few minutes. All the people of the country came to see the great contest, to the winner of which the king had promised to present prizes of cloth and money, and all the strongest men came. When they saw the king's son, whom nobody knew, they laughed and said, "Who is this small boy? He can have no chance against us." But when they came to wrestle, they very soon found that they were no match for him."

These beliefs are not limited to the Hausa, as the discussions in the body of this article of the bans against spiritual advisors in South Africa and reactions against wrestlers' charms in Zambia demonstrate. Moreover, this effect is not limited to combat sports, as *The Times of Zambia* (2005) reports, "The Confederation of African Football (CAF) have banned "team advisors," otherwise known as witchdoctors, from any role within teams competing in the African Nations Cup.... Countries that in the past have employed so-called "wisemen" include Mali, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Cameroun, Congo, Togo, Ivory Coast and Zambia."

Works Cited/Sources

Abubakar, Uthman. (2005) "Dambe: Professionalising a Traditional Sport," allAfrica_com Nigeria [column] Dambe Professionalising a Traditional Sport.htm [originally published in Abuja *Daily Trust*, May 24, 2005]

Blewett, Bert. (2005) "Vabaza, Makepula Top the Bill" South African *Sunday Tribune*, February 20, 2005
<http://www.sundaytribune.co.za/index.php?fSectionId=245&fArticleId=2417592>

Dayrell, Elphinstone. (1910) *Folk Stories from Southern Nigeria West Africa*. Longmans, Green and Company. <http://www.public-domain-content.com/books/africa/fssn/fsn05.shtml>

Gondwe, Kennedy. (2005) "Wrestlers Get to Grips with Muti," BBC News: World Edition. February 8, 2005 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4247561.stm>

Powe, Edward. (1994) *Black Martial Arts Volume I: Combat Games of Northern Nigeria*. Madison, WI: Dan Aiki Publications

"Traditional Butchers' Boxing Is Reborn." (2002) *Pakistani Daily Times*, April 25, 2002
http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_25-4-2002_pg2_7

"Witchdoctors Banned from Nations Cup." (2005) *The Times of Zambia*.
<http://www.times.co.zm/news/viewnews.cgi?category=17&id=1011293702>

Yahuza, Ibrahim (Carambe Jarimi). E-mail correspondence 5/18/05, 5/19/05, 5/26/05

_____. Telephone interviews 5/19/05, 5/24/05, 5/26/05