

Atlanta Rights of Passage

By: (Brad Benjamin) Kwame Asamoah

The process was born because the Jegna of the community called for a process to educate young Afrikan boys in the traditions of their ancestors, and to equip them with skills needed to re-build a strong Afrikan nation. Baba Kweku, Baba Densu, Baba Ayetoro, Baba Yohance, and Baba Kwabena facilitated the rights of passage in Atlanta. This process began in the fall of 2004 and was intended for boys between the ages of 13 and 14.

September 9th was the date of our initiation. Stolen away from our homes like criminals about to be lynched, seven strangers, Kweku, Jehuti, Olu, Dominique, Omari, Iran, and myself, Brad, met for the first time in, in fear and silence, to begin a brotherhood that would last forever.

From the date of our initiation we started to have weekly meetings on Sundays. During these meetings we studied martial arts, ancient Ghanaian rituals, farming, and exercised. Once school finally started I learned that 3 of the other 6 brothers in the process with me also attended my school, and one graduated the year before. I also learned that 3 of the 5 facilitators of the process were teaching at the school. This made for incentives to act right in school, and for embarrassing punishments when we acted out.

These weekly meeting continued until Saturday June 18, 2005 when we began a five week isolation period. Due to the abundance of undeveloped land in Georgia, we were able to get a ten-acre plot of forestland away from the bustling metropolis known as Atlanta. During this time we weren't allowed to have any contact with the outside world, be it phone, letter, visits, and we had to put our relationships with whatever sistas we committed to on hold for 5 weeks. Imagine getting a call from your boyfriend, or girlfriend, saying that they couldn't see, or talk to you for 5 weeks, and they couldn't tell you why. This presented outward situations for all of us.

Once the isolation began, we established jobs for people to do in order to maintain a daily order. Things such as settings 14 buckets of water in the sun to provide hot water for showering, cooking meals, collecting firewood, etc. were some of the daily responsibilities bestowed upon us. Once our morning chores were completed, we ran a considerable distance and went through our daily calisthenics routine.

During this time we indulged in more secretive and intense spirit evoking rituals, visits and messages from the Orisa was not an uncommon occurrence. Our martial arts training in preparation for our graduation, intensified. We also learned an Afrikan dance and practiced daily our graduating routine. We also learned stick fighting for graduation.

July 16 finally came and we were aloud to use a shower for the first time before we cut down our trees to fashion our spears form in preparation for our graduation later that day. What a glorious graduation it was, followed by unsuspected female attention during the after party. After all of this excitement we went home with new medicine and life long lessons.