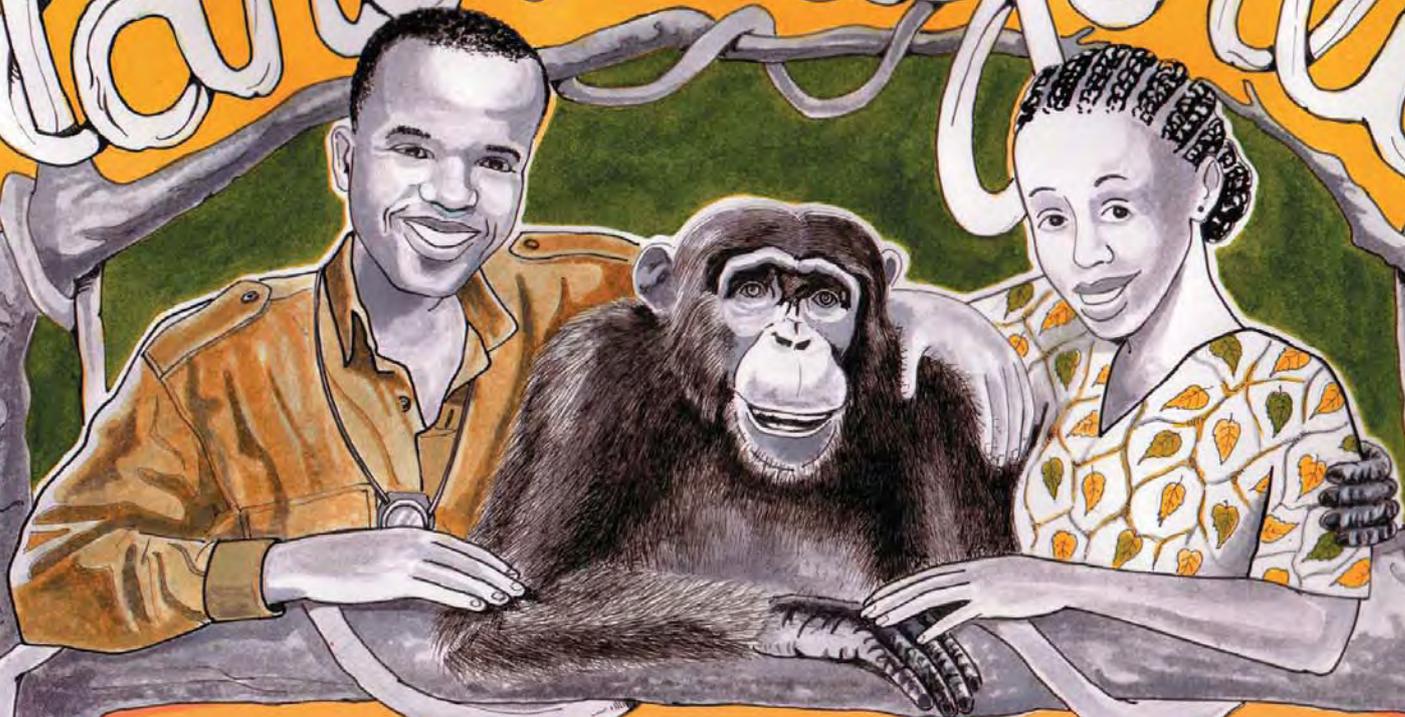
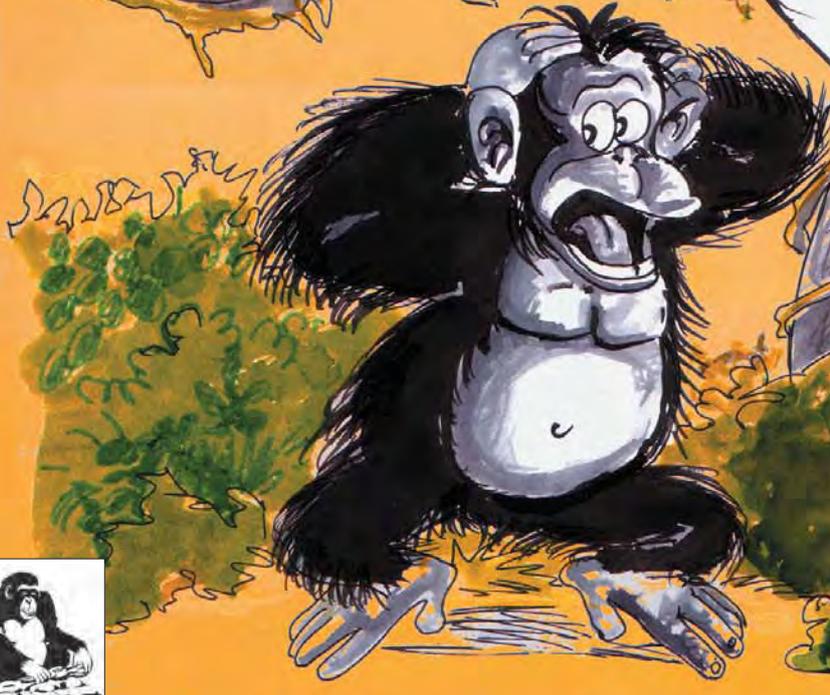


Paroles de l'orang



Newsletter N. 2
June 2004

Help!
They're
shooting



FOREST WISDOM

A NEWSLETTER FOR ALL OF YOU:

- Villagers living near a national park, and for
- Everyone who cares about the conservation of the forests and wildlife

Ymako Teatri with
« Our cousins in the forest »



FOREST WISDOM

- Tells the life of certain inhabitants of the forest: the chimpanzees
- Shows the problems and threats to the forest
- Supplies information
- Answers your questions and invites you to contribute to this newsletter
- Invites you to protect the great forest, this national heritage which is also yours

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- Interviews

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WCF – Africa c/o CSRS, 01 BP 1303, Abidjan 01, Côte d'Ivoire



Hello and good health to you all!

The Côte d'Ivoire has just gone through a dramatic period with repercussions that have neither stopped on the border of the Taï National Park nor at the chimpanzees. The report about Margot and her two daughters, Miriam and Makéba, gives an example: On the 17th of November 2000 Margot, a female chimpanzee of the Taï forest, appeared in the group with TWINS. I didn't believe my eyes because twins are very rare in chimpanzees and until then I had never seen any in the Taï forest. In the cases known, the mother didn't succeed in sufficiently feeding two babies at a time, so that one of the babies always died prematurely. Grégoire Nohon, one of the assistants of the research project, watched the evolution of that little family from close up. Margot seemed to do fine with her two girls, carrying them around all day long. To have two babies clinging to one's belly or back, to breast-feed them at the same time and always keep an eye on them is hard work, but everything went very well. The babies' older brother Mustapha, who is 5 years and a half old, was watching it all with curiosity. In March 2001 the twins started to move more and to show interest in their big brother, and with their little hands they touched the fruits their mother was eating. In September

2002 they started playing in the trees and venturing a little away from their mother. But before she went anywhere, Margot was always looking for them, and when she had found them she first took Miriam on her back between her shoulders and then placed Makéba further down on her haunches.

Everything went very well! But, unfortunately, at the end of November 2002, a poacher from a village near the research station of Taï, profiting from the dramatic disorder in the country, came into the forest. He killed Margot with his gun. We don't know what happened to Miriam and Makéba, but we can imagine how intolerable the pain and horror was for the two babies.

The troubles in Côte d'Ivoire were felt as far as the core of the Taï forest, Margot, Miriam and Makéba being their victims. They are not the only ones who suffered from this crisis. However, let's not forget that by respecting not only humans, but also the nature that enriches our everyday life, we fight for the survival and the future of us all – including our cousins from the forest. It's up to us to decide if we accept that our planet is becoming more and more impoverished every day or if we rather want that it keeps its diversity and natural riches.

See you soon,
Christophe Boesch



THE KNOWLEDGE OF OUR ACESTORS



Hedwige Boesch

Some medicinal plants from the Taï forest that are used in the traditional medicine

In the dense and humid forest of the Taï National Park, there is a large number of trees, shrubs, lianas and herbaceous plants to which medicinal qualities are ascribed. However, the knowledge of these qualities is fragmentary because the traditional African medical knowledge is passed on by word of mouth from generation to generation within the family circle. This constitutes a real cultural heritage. Often, the healers and sorcerers save their knowledge jealously to ensure their own authority and to benefit from the usage of the plants. Some of them have a big reputation, but refuse to spread their knowledge and disappear without having ensured that their secrets are passed on. Thanks to observations and ethnobotanical studies, the knowledge of the medicinal plants has improved and some achievements of the traditional medicine can be saved. But the forest is also a reservoir of plants that can ensure our future. There is, for example, a wild coffee plant growing in the Taï forest that could become very important if the coffee plantations were affected by a serious disease.

Here we want to tell you about some plants that can still be found in the Taï forest and that can be used for medical and other purposes.

According to Henri Gnésio Téré, who has been working a lot on indigenous plant names, one shrub is often called „sickle or razor handle“ because of its hard wood that is used for the fabrication of the handles of various tools. He gives us all the other

existing names for this shrub: **Djinlo** (Guéré), **Mahangan** (Oubi), **Beboka** (Kroumen), **Gaigai** (Abé), **Kraingbêsé** (Ebrié), **Brémonaloa** (Agni) and **Tèkpi** (Attié).

This shrub of 5 to 6 m height and with a diameter up to 10 cm is very common in the undergrowth of the dense and humid forests of the Ivory Coast. Its blossoms are very visible, splendidly coloured, with several more or less serrated collars. The petals are cream-yellow on the edges and red inside. The spherical fruits have a diameter of about 5.5 cm and are yellow-orange and contain a number of red-violet seeds embedded in a white, tasty pulp.

The species of the West African genus *Napoleona* are used in the traditional medicine: the roots, for example, can heal fever, but the most important benefit is derived from the leaves, which are chewed and then placed on a bleeding wound, stopping the bleeding rapidly. It's very useful to know this, especially when one happens to be in the field or in the forest having a bleeding injury.

„Compréhension et utilisation du monde végétal chez les Guérés et les Oubis“ (Knowledge and utilization of the plant world in the Guérés and the Oubis) by Henri Gnésio Téré. The plant had already been described by Ambroise Marie François Joseph Palisot de Beauvois, a Bonapartist living around 1800 in Paris.



West African Napoleona leonensis (in Latin)

Drawing: Marianne Knecht

TOSCA AND HER FAMILY (CONTINUED)



Hedwige Boesch

August 1986: Tina, Tosca's daughter, put her hand into a wire snare... (Newsletter No. 1). She was already born with a malformation of both hands and now it's unbearable.

Finally, the wire has come off the trap, but she can't remove it from her hand. It hurts too much when she touches it, and she does not allow her mother to approach – it's an ordeal. She walks around with an extremely swollen hand. A month later her hand is as if it would be dead – she never uses it. Five months later the wire is gone, and a year later, in August 1987, we see her for the first time moving her thumb a tiny little bit. Then, in September, she starts to put her hand on the ground while walking – what a miracle! For more than a year, the little one suffered an ordeal, and her life was in danger. It was not only threatened by gangrene, a deadly infection, but also by the fact that she couldn't move quickly or climb trees... And what would she have done when facing a predator? How horrible and cruel these snares are.

Her brother Tarzan, however, is developing well. He is profiting from Tosca's strong personality and is becoming a courageous little lad. Tosca lets him move out of sight, and he plays with other little rascals for quite some time. Without his mother, he is following the group without giving it a second thought, and only then Tosca reacts and fetches him back. Usually, children of that age always stay within eyeshot of their mother.

The world of Tosca and her little ones seems to be back to its normal ways when they are hit by the next and even bigger disaster. On the 31st of January 1989 happiness and security turn into drama. We see that Tarzan and Tina are constantly in the group – without Tosca. This is a sign that can't be misinterpreted – oh no! Tosca must be dead. We hear Tarzan's silent and miserable crying, and we watch with emotion how his big sister – that little girl Tina – takes him with her into her sleeping nest to spend the night there. Suddenly, they have become orphans, facing a more than uncertain future. But Tarzan does not hesitate. The big friend of his mother – he knows him: that's Brutus, the dominant male. And it's to him that he turns and not to one of the females. That's outstanding! Maybe he does it because Brutus has already adopted a little male, Ali, and Tarzan takes this as a good sign. Ali does not object to the newcomer and Tarzan is grooming Brutus and Ali a lot in order to strengthen this fragile bond, but he also grooms his sister whom he wants to keep very

close to him for his comfort. Tina seems to be less convinced of this association with Brutus. On the one hand, she does not want to leave her little brother, on the other hand she is afraid of Brutus. That's why she follows them from a certain distance and like this she benefits from the protection of the group of males in which Brutus is dominant.

Brutus is a generous adoptive father – he shares nuts, meat and also his sleeping nest with the little one. He is a male full of tenderness and it's certainly not by chance that he has loyal allies among the females. We even saw him carrying the little ones against his belly and walking around like this, like the females do, with a happy expression on his face. And so, here he is with 3 children on his heels. What a pleasant picture!

WHERE DO THEY SLEEP?

The chimpanzees are nomads. Every day, they cover more or less long distances within their territory. The territory of the chimpanzee community that we are observing near Tai is about 25 km². In the evenings, every chimpanzee builds himself a bed in a tree. For that purpose he prepares a sort of nest out of leafy branches that he bends into the right shape, using a tree fork as support. Mothers share their bed with their babies.

ADOPTION

It's unusual that a male chimpanzee adopts an orphan because it's usually the females who do the adoptions. The chances of survival of the orphans are very low and under the age of 5 they very rarely survive at all. The bond of affection between the mother and her baby is so strong that the shock and the sorrow of losing the mother outweighs the care, the food and the comfort the adoptive mother can give. Over the age of 5 the prospects are better. To have been adopted by the dominant male of course has positive effects. It's likely that a little lad like Tarzan has already experienced a lot due to the strong personality of his mother, but with Brutus he is becoming a youngster that will be introduced to the hunt for the red colobus at least 5 years before the usual age. Tarzan will not only be introduced into the hunting technique very early, he will even be taught by the absolute expert. There is no one in this chimpanzee community that is able to hunt like Brutus.



TOSCA AND HER FAMILY



Tosca tries to take the wire off but Tina refuses and tries to run away, because she is so much in pain.



Under Tosca's sad and distressed look, Tina tries to remove the wire herself – but in vain.



Tosca is dead. Tina and Tarzan are inconsolable. Tarzan nestles into Tina's arms to find a bit of comfort. In the meantime Brutus and the other members of the clan discuss Tosca's death.



Tarzan lets Brutus adopt him. Under Tina's watchful eye, Tarzan does not leave Brutus anymore, with Ali, Brutus' other adoptive son, always around.



After the hunt, Brutus has taken his share of meat and explains Tarzan the advantages and obligations of being the head of the group and, above all, of being the strongest male. In the meantime, the other members of the group eat the pieces Brutus has given to them.

THE ORPHANS OF THE LEIPZIG ZOO

Hedwige Boesch

What is, in the Taï forest, the fate of a little chimpanzee that has lost his mother? If he is younger than 5 years, he will always die, even if he is lucky enough to have been adopted by another female. The bond of affection between mother and baby is so strong, that the grief caused by the loss of the baby's mother outweighs the care, the food and the comfort of being carried provided by the adoptive mother. Is a poacher aware of what he is doing when he goes calmly into the forest to kill a chimpanzee mother? Does he realize what he is doing when he catches the desperate baby, ties it to a rope and sits it onto the body of its murdered mother to transport them to the village – one to be eaten and the other one to be used as a toy, to be exposed to everyone's mercy and to be eaten as well in the end?

When the little one is a bit older, 5 or 6 years old, it can be adopted successfully by another female. Sometimes this female is an older sister, but it can even be the dominant male. This exceptional case happened in Taï, where the dominant male successfully adopted several children. But life in the jungle is far from being easy and many of the little orphans don't grow old because the conditions of survival are too hard – for example, predators like the leopard are dangerous and it is very hard to survive the period between the death of the mother and a possible adoption. Desperate, the little one wanders through the forest that he has so far only discovered with joy and curiosity, watched over by his mother, and that has from one day to the next turned into a hostile environment.

The lot of the orphans of the Leipzig Zoo is a completely different one: first of all, they didn't go through the terrible nightmare of losing their mother due to a violent death. No, they were born in a zoo and their mother refused to breast-feed them. Thus, they are "orphans", i.e. they are fed with the bottle and cared for like human babies. All day long, these little ones are



MPI Département de Psychologie au Zoo Leipzig

well looked after by kind assistants who groom the babies and play with them. Watching them, one can only smile. It's the big attraction for the public in the Leipzig Zoo to observe a young girl who is enjoying herself in an enclosure with 3 little chimpanzees, letting them rummage through her pockets or looking at a fashion catalogue with them! Instead of learning how to forage or to orientate themselves in the forest, the little chimpanzees in the Leipzig Zoo are confronted with other problems. The researchers invent complicated tasks that have to be solved by the chimpanzees and whose objective is to study how learning works in chimpanzees compared to humans. The most important question is to find out what really sets us humans apart from the apes.

Fortunately, the zoos of today don't capture wild animals anymore. On the contrary, the Leipzig Zoo supports our activities to increase the chances of survival of the wild chimpanzees in their natural environment – the tropical rain forest, like the Taï forest in Côte d'Ivoire.



THE TOUR OF YMAKO TEATRI

Hedwige Boesch

The month of May 2002 will stay in the memory of many people living around the Taï National Park. With permission of the PACPNT, the theatre group “Ymako Teatri” started its first tour organised by the Wild Chimpanzee Foundation. They performed the play “Our cousins in the forest”, directed by Claude Gnakouri and Luis Marquez. Claude himself was playing two of the distinctive personalities of the play. He was playing the old head of the family who sends his nephew into the forest to get some meat for a funeral, but he was also acting the part of an old male chimpanzee that covers the body of a shot female with branches. As for Luis, he acted the part of the observer, the scientist. More than 8000 persons came to see the excellent performances and inspiring actors, to enjoy the music, the singing, the drama and the dancing about a subject that preoccupies all of us: the disappearance of the tropical rain forest and its inhabitants such as our cousins, the chimpanzees! We very much appreciate that all the notable people of the villages and the representatives of the local authorities came to see the play and we thank everybody for their encouraging support.

The play goes back to the fact that many people think the chimpanzee is vicious and mean, that he is destroying plantations and also that he is a real danger for them. But then, others are aware that he is very close to us. Some said point-blank “they are human”, knowing stories about the tacit understanding between humans and chimpanzees told by the old people. The theatre play shows not only the problems of living side by side with the chimpanzees but also the extraordinary behaviour of our hairy cousin based on the knowledge acquired in more than 20 years of research. When at the end of the spectacle, the actors addressed the question to the spectators: “Do we have the right to kill and to eat a chimpanzee?”, the answer was a clear and distinct “NO”. “The chimpanzee has the right to live like us humans, he is too close to us, and we don’t want him to disappear from our forest and from our planet. We want that our children can still hear him and maybe even spot from time to time one of these intelligent and furtive creatures who are a part of our heritage.” This answer is very true, because the law banning the hunt of the chimpanzees is a formal law in Côte d’Ivoire. Congratulations to that wonderful realization!

With this in mind, we are happy to continue our activities with this Newsletter No. 2 and with a film about the chimpanzees in the Taï forest, which will be



Photos: Ilka Herbinger

shown soon in the villages. In December 2003 “Ymako Teatri” had come again to the Taï forest to make people sing, laugh and think – this time with young actors from the secondary school of Taï and their troupe named “Un pour Tous” (“One for All”), and on the other side of the national park with schoolkids from the public primary school of Wonséaly. This was a project of the WCF and the theatre group “Ymako Teatri” to make sure that this spectacle stays in the region. To be continued in our next newsletters, and, please read also the interviews on the last page.

THE LIFE OF GREGOIRE NOHON

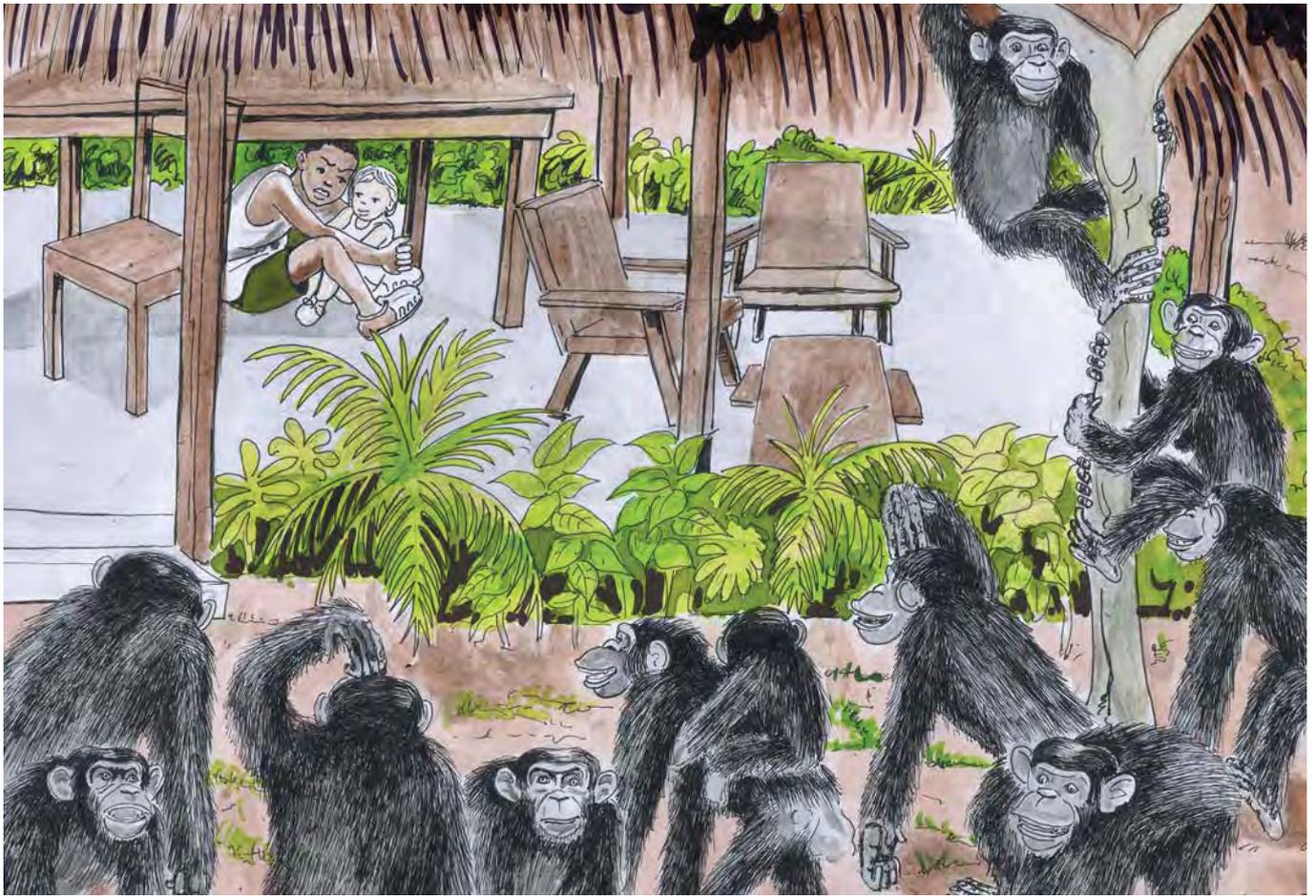
Here we recount the history of Grégoire, today an assistant in the chimpanzee research project (see Newsletter No. 1)



When he is 15, Grégoire accompanies his father on the hunt. He is sad, because the first chimpanzee he sees in his life is dead. After the hunt, the animals are smoked and dried before they will be sold in the village. Grégoire, who is not at all happy to see that so many chimpanzees are killed, tries in vain to oppose his father. He has decided to adopt a half-starved baby monkey whose mother was killed, and he sadly watches his father and his cousin smoke the animals.



Grégoire is 20 years old. Through his uncle Théo Tiépkán, manager at the research station in the Taï forest, he meets Christophe and Hedwige Boesch, a couple from Europe. They work on a research project on the behaviour of the chimpanzees in the Taï forest. This couple has just had a child named Lukas and they are looking for a trustworthy person that could help them take care of their son.



One day, when Christophe and Hedwige are in the forest, about thirty chimpanzees turn up at the clearing of the camp, shouting and drumming deafeningly. Frightened, Grégoire barricades himself with Lukas on the terrace of the hut. Grégoire is fascinated by these magnificent animals he sees for the first time in their natural environment.



Back in the camp, Christophe and Hedwige are very surprised to find Grégoire and Lukas hidden under the table, all trembling. After a while, when Grégoire has calmed down, he explains that he thinks that all that row was maybe caused by a leopard attacking the chimpanzee group.

...to be continued

THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT THE THEATRE....

Interviews and Pictures: Goné Bi Zoro Bertin



Léon Oulé Sio (30 years, Pauléoula)
Have you seen the theatre performance about the chimpanzees last year?

L. O. S.: No, on

this day I wasn't in the village, but the people who had seen the performance were talking a lot about it. *What did they tell you?*

L. O. S.: They said that it was great and that they want it to come back, because with this theatre one thinks of the park. I mean, when there are always people talking to you about the park this is really good. We who have not been there also want that the theatre group comes again.

Tiédé Angèle

(32 years, Pauléoula)

What is your opinion about the visit of the theatre group?



T. A.: I saw the performance and I liked it very much. But I want them to come back so that the people see and understand why the chimps have to be protected. This play shows that the chimpanzees are really humans. That's why it has to be repeated.

Téré Victor, head of the village of Pauléoula (born in 1926, Pauléoula)
What do you think about the theatre play about the chimpanzees that came to your village last year?



T.V.: That was a good thing that the theatre people came here. Everybody loved the play. Here, we belong to the same family as the chimps, we don't kill them.

When someone kills a chimp here, we cry. We want the theatre group to come back, so that our children see how the chimps live in the forest. The chimpanzee is a human being, he does everything as humans do.



Great! We adored the theatre - we liked it very, very much... It really has to come back!

Ousmane (44 years, planter from Burkina Faso)

What is your opinion about the visit of the theatre group?



I could only see that it was about chimps but I didn't understand it. There were so many people and I was standing in the back, so I couldn't see very well. Maybe I can understand it better, when they come back.



Fatou (a woman from Burkina Faso)
We loved the theatre. We want it to come back.

Alida Charlotte (20 years, Pauléoula)
I saw the play but not till the end. That's why I want them to come back.



A group of children: Ouffoué, 11 years, Kami, 9 years. They were singing the song from the theatre play ("The chimpanzees are our cousins...")



Bamba Maney (merchant, 38 years)

The play was very well performed. The people really liked it and understood how close the chimps are to us humans. The fact that the children are still imitating scenes from the play sometimes in the evenings proves it. Even the people who don't understand French, still could understand the theatre play.



Abdoulaye Zabré (planter from Burkina Faso, displaced from Para, 24 years old).

I saw the theatre in Para. I have understood that we must not kill the chimps because they are like us. We really liked it. When they come back, this will be a good thing.

Winh Néa

Joachime (wife of the head of the village Sakré, war-displaced, 45 years old).



We have understood the message of the theatre play. We really liked it. The posters are still hanging in our house. We are asked to not kill the chimps because they are like us. As we come from a family that adores the chimpanzees, we got the message very quickly.