

The book "Writing from Bujumbura" in Japanese by the author Yoshikazu Kamigaito has been translated and adapted into French by Jean-Maurice Huard

Writing from Bujumbura

The book "Writing from Bujumbura" par Kamigaito Yoshikazu

Translation from Japanese and adaptation into French: Jean-Maurice Huard

Dutch version: Peter Keijers

German version: Andréas Peil

English version: word translate

Chapter 1

When did Africa come into my life? Yasuhiko Sawada wonders.

His plane left Brussels in the middle of the night to reach Africa in the early morning and land in Nairobi, Kenya at eight o'clock in the morning. He remembers looking with amusement through the porthole to see if there would not be a lion or a zebra.

All the employees at the airport were white, but when the door opened, there were five or six black employees. Entering the plane dancing; their shapeless trousers revealed their thin ankles. With long mops, they began to clean the inside of the plane.

Was that when Africa came into his shoes?

An hour later, arrived in Kigali, Rwanda. For about an hour, we had to wait in a waiting room similar to that of a barracks. There were blacks, whites and Asians; in short, a true sample of humanity. As the meadow around was like everywhere else, he did not feel out of place. On the wall the clock gave an hour of fantasy; a little further on were displayed photos of lions and crocodiles, right next to the photo of a handsome man in uniform, probably the president of the country.

Wasn't that when Africa entered the heart of Sawada?

From Kigali to Bujumbura the flight did not last twenty-five minutes. At the immigration counter, he was given a declaration to complete. As he had not yet decided where to stay, he left the "place of residence" box blank.

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"I am invited by the Puma, the karate club."

"In that case, come here!"

All the airport staff were visibly aware; it was passed through a separate corridor. Because there the expression "queuing" has no meaning. Black passengers pass in front of whites giving themselves great airs. Small as he is, Sawada had no chance of slipping into one of these lines, but when he was treated as a VIP, he felt better. A group of young black people watched the scene with a hilarious look that warmed his heart. Some hid behind a friend's back, mischievous smiles, like those of schoolchildren who have just played a prank on his teacher. "He's a karate buddy!"

Could it be there, in this country and at that time, that Africa bewitched him?

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