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## Representation of Time and Space in Oral History : Focusing on Oral History of the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms

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## Representation of Time and Space in Oral History —Focusing on Oral History of the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms

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### 1. Subject and Materials

Oral tradition has long served as a record of history in societies without writing. In this paper, I examine how time and space are represented in oral history, by focusing on the case of the ancient Mosi Kingdoms (West Africa, the present Burkina Faso), where I have spent a long time for field studies. According to my estimation, the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms was founded in savannah in a hinterland of West Africa around the 15<sup>th</sup> century, existing until the French colonization at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During colonial days as well as the period after independence in 1960 to become a republic, the monarchy was and has been maintained as a customary institution. It has been assuring popular support as a social legacy inherited from the long past.

At the present time, people in this society still maintain the tradition of reciting the genealogy of monarchs over generations, at rituals headed by the Mosi kings. It is considered that the original text of recitation is a narrative presented in drum language, which is played by the chief court musicians (*ben'naaba*). During particularly important rituals, when the chief of court musicians beats drum, one of junior musicians translates the recitation by drum language, phrase by phrase into the Mosi language (*moore*), in a loud voice and in a stylized manner, in the presence of the king and audience.

The kings of the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms are supposed to share the same ancestors. Each dynasty of these kingdoms placed their basis in a different location over a wide area of savannah. In this report, I will mainly focus on the historical tradition of the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty, which is located in the south. I have spent more than five years in total in this area for field work. According to the legend of origin, the dynasty of *Tānkvdgo* was the oldest one in the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms. I believe that, by comparing the historical tradition of *Tānkvdgo* with that of other Mosi kingdoms, we will be able to elucidate essential nature of historical narratives, which can be corroborated by concrete examples.

In order to discuss the theme of this symposium, "Time and Language", focusing on oral history, I would like to address the following five points in my paper:

- 1) How can space, which exists in the second dimension, be represented in a sequence of sounds, which exist in the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension. In other words, whereas a historical narrative is presented with an elapse of time, how can space be manifested in it?
- 2) How is time manifested in the structure of recitation which depicts the genealogy of dynasties?
- 3) We can consider that history is a dialogue between the past and the present. How are the past and the present related to each other in the process of this dialogue?
- 4) The centrepiece of oral tradition in the Mosi is the recitation of names of ancestors of the current king. It is a sort of presentation of king's pedigree. I am interested in analyzing the relations between three parties who are involved with this process, namely, (1) the court musician who articulates the narrative, (2) the audience in the ceremony and (3) the kings in the past who appear in the narrative.
- 5) In what kind of tense and aspect is the language of historical tradition used, while the narrative has such form and content as I will describe hereafter.

## 2. Structure of Oral History and Representation of Space

In the *Tānkvdgo* genealogy which I am dealing with are listed about thirty kings from the founder to the present king. (Cf. Table 1 and Table 2) It is difficult to determine the precise number of kings through its history. The reason is that the names of kings, *zabyuure* (*zabyvya*), or 'battle names', are not proper nouns, but each group of phrases which represents each king of the past consists of several common nouns that form a maxim and are officially offered to the newly enthroned kings. Furthermore, most of kings were given several names instead of one. Therefore, as far as certain time periods for which details of supplementary oral tradition have been lost are concerned, it is impossible to identify kings, who reigned the Mosi society during those periods, with a "fixed" name.

Especially, the names of those in Sections 11 and 12 of Table 1 carry quite uncertainty. There seem to be a few phrases referring to a group of kings, who used to rule in several localities of this region in the past. Those particular small local dynasties were decayed afterward, whereas the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty emerged as a new dominant power. Those dynasties which were on the decline ceased the traditional ceremonies for court musicians to recite kings' names over generations in a stylized and so in a formatted fashion. As a result, together with the decline of dynasties, the "original texts" of those kings' genealogy, which had been structured in a certain form and passed on through generations, disappeared. Many of them were eventually absorbed and united in historical traditions of other dynasties, which subjugated these small dynasties.

As was the case in many sub-Saharan states, the Mosi kingdoms, particularly in the early period, used to be characterized that they were from reign to reign over the

Table 1

Chapter	Location	Section	Name of King	Father's Name		Mother's Name		Battle Name		Note (Account, Description, Narration)		Event		Number of Phrases in Section		Number of Phrases in Chapter	
				A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B
I	Zaambāalga	1	<i>Zūngrāna Wubri Soarba</i>	—	—	—	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	19	18	49	46
		2		+	+	+	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	17	16		
		3		—	—	+	+	—	—	+	+	—	—	13	12		
II	Welgo	4	<i>Kimbo Viire Nabugba Yamba</i>	/	—	/	—	+	—	—	—	/	—	0	12	38	46
		5		—	—	+	+	—	—	+	+	—	—	13	11		
		6		—	—	+	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	11	11		
		7		+	+	—	—	—	—	+	+	+	+	14	12		
III	Zend-Goodē	8	<i>Wobgo Zende Kugri</i>	—	—	+	—	+	—	—	—	—	—	12	12	32	33
		9		—	—	+	+	+	—	—	+	—	—	7	7		
IV	Tinoangē-Moaaga	10	<i>Bendoba and others Malka and others</i>	—	—	—	—	+	—	—	—	—	—	13	14	32	31
		11		—	—	—	—	+	—	—	+	—	—	13	13		
V	Goodē-Gōdgē	12	<i>Pōaaga Bugum Pi'iga</i>	—	—	—	—	+	—	—	—	—	—	19	18	58	60
		13		—	—	+	+	+	+	?	?	?	?	23	26		
		14		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—	19	18		
VI	Tānkvago	15	<i>Sigri Gigempolle Yemde (Lak-Wobgo) Bāogo Ritmiidu Saluka Saplem Yāmbweogo Sānem Karōngo Koom Kuba Tigre</i>	—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	16	16	633	489
		16		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	32	31		
		17		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	39	39		
		18		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	49	49		
		19		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	41	41		
		20		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	12	10		
		21		—	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	—	—	30	28		
		22		—	—	—	—	+	+	—	—	—	—	43	41		
		23		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	—	—	42	45		
		24		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	56	49		
		25		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	76	28		
		26		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	39	27		
		27		—	—	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	+	143	78	258	133
		28		+	+	+	+	+	+	—	—	+	—	31	23		

region, instead of settling at one location. This tradition is deeply related to how rules for royal succession to the throne were established, and how the royal court was institutionalized for the appointment of the royal successor. When succession to the throne was not firmly institutionalized in earlier communities, which did not have a formal system of well defined rules, procedures, nor courtiers and bureaucrats who could support necessary protocols, it was not unusual at all that candidates for the throne were engaged in harsh competition and confrontation, seeking the ruling power. Those who lost in the competition had to leave the former capital with their supporters, moving to another place, where they founded new dynasties. Such a thing might have happened quite frequently. Even when a breakup did not take place within the royal court and a new king stayed in the same area, it was the custom of the Mosi, as was also the case in many sub-Saharan states, that the successor left the palace of his predecessor, constructing his own residence in a location away from the predecessors'.

Through the field survey, I tried to identify the spatial positioning of kings residence in the recitation of their names, by analyzing what is manifested in a sequence of sounds, which is an entity in the 1<sup>st</sup> dimension. I also collected, analyzed and compared various pieces of supplementary oral history (unstructured narratives, not incorporated in properly formatted orthodox texts which are recited by official royal musicians at rituals) in various regions. The study was culminated in Table 2, which represents the relations between time and space.

The problem is that, even by closely looking at these two Tables, we cannot understand how time and space, which are associated with the history of past dynasties moving around in the region, are manifested in the recitation. In order for us to clarify the way in which time and space are represented in their oral history, we need to compare the oral tradition of *Tānkvdgo* community with that of others. As shown in Table 2, some dynasties had preceded the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty or diverged from it. There were political confrontation and tension between the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty, as the ruler, and surrounding dynasties, as the ruled. The former settled at *Tānkvdgo* and governed a wide area of the south with its overwhelming power. I was interested in comparing different sets of narratives, thereby elucidating how those dynasties were related to each other. What should be noted in this type of study is the fact that the recitation was "official court performance as a record of history" with political nature. It was presented in public by court musicians, who dedicated allegiance to the king. The king was a culmination of regal authority in centrally controlled polities, in the presence of whom the oral tradition was performed in public during court rituals. Before moving into the depth of analysis, however, I would like to touch upon the form and structure of historical narratives in the Mosi society first.

As I said before, in the performance, the orthodox text is the "drum language" which is presented by the chief of court musicians. Following the drum beat with an interval of one phrase all the way, one of the junior musicians recites the verbal translation of story. In this paper, I focus on the following materials, which are in

Table 2a Locations of Mosi Dynasties and Sequence of Recitation (I–VI)

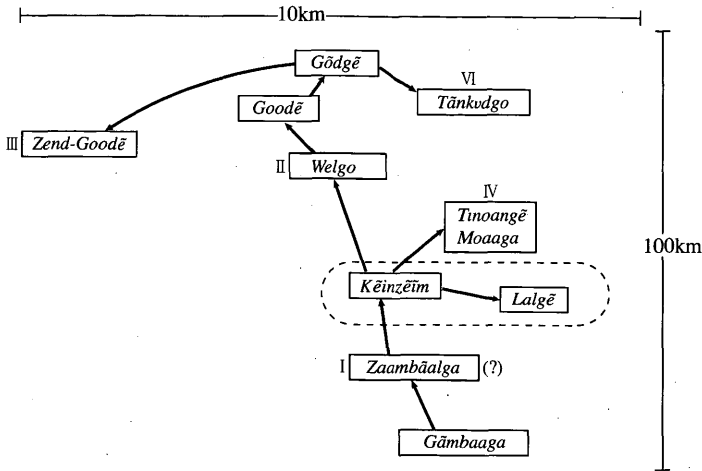
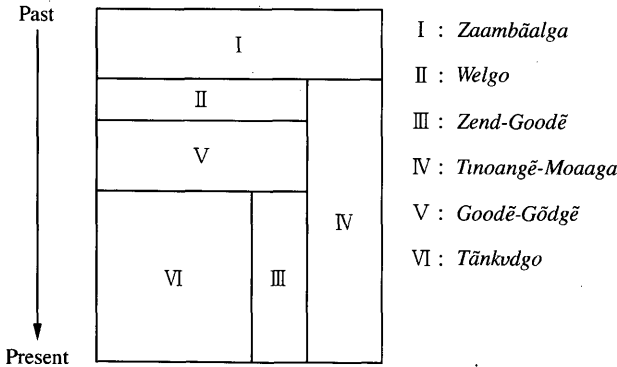


Table 2b Chronological Order of Dynasties and Sequence of Recitation (I–VI)



- fact the result of significant effort in verbatim record taking:
- (A) A live record (Nov. 29, 1974) of an annual festival (*Bugum yaoē*), in which the current king presented animal on the grave of King *Bugum*, who had governed the Mosi society shortly before their settlement in *Tākvdgo*. He was a direct ancestor of the king today.
  - (B) A special record on 21 Feb., 1975. On Friday every third week (*Arzumkasenga*), court musicians get together at the palace in *Tānkvdgo*, performing the recitation of royal pedigree. On that particular day, after the ritual, I had the performance repeated again in the presence of the king, solely for the purpose of sound recording.<sup>1)</sup>

At the onset of the performance, the chief of musicians ask, for permission for calling out the names of the king’s ancestors. The request is addressed to the king

in presence, local fetishes and various social groups, constituents of the kingdom. It takes a long time. Because of this long introductory part, the recitation is usually called "solicitation for permission (*kabsgo*)."

It is followed by a refrain of auspicious phrases, which are articulated with a wish addressed to their deity, *wēnde*, invisible allmighty being, for the stable and flourishing monarchy as well as the prosperity of Mosi people during the next year.

Then a question part comes, reading, "Your majesty, who is your ancestor?" As a reply to this question, the reciter himself announces the names of king's ancestor. Fathers' names of the mentioned ancestor are also pronounced from time to time. In some cases, there is a brief narrative inserted about the ancestor. Furthermore, sometimes added to this is the interpretation of certain historical events. It is often the case that the interpretation contains warning or reprimand, which are addressed toward some royal members, high ranking courtiers and subjects of the king, who did not dedicate full allegiance to the king. The recitation also refers to "battle (conflict) names" of the current king (*zab-yuure*), explained later. The performance is concluded with a phrase of wish, praying for the long-lasting prosperity of monarch and the happiness and comfort for his subjects. The whole text consists of about 900 phrases.

All the narrative is presented with almost excessive parables— metaphors with plants, animals and natural phenomena. The Mosi language does not have, as a grammatical category, proper nouns for the person. Kings' names, too, are expressed as which consist of common nouns. By attaching a particle, "*a*", however, which is identical to the singular form of personal pronoun for a third person, it is made clear that the reference is made to a person. On the other hand, as I am going to discuss in detail later, the names of Mosi kings after a certain period are not made of a single word, but of phrases which have a function of maxim as well as "war name." There is additional complication that, in some cases, there are multiple "war names" for one king. For this reason, there are several kings whom we cannot identify with a "fixed" name in the oral history. The complexity is further compounded by the fact that it is sometimes quite difficult to distinguish kings' "battle names" from the sections of narration or interpretation about them. The latter is constructed too on parables and metaphors of plants, animals and natural phenomena. Unless there is supplementary oral tradition attached to it, whereby certain phrases being defined as king's name, we are unable to draw a distinction between the section for names and those for depiction of situation.

"Battle (conflict) names" are usually presented to kings by courtiers at their coronation or during the reign. Sometimes kings themselves choose their "battle names." The names normally consist of phrases, which depict circumstances where kings came to the throne. At the same time, in some cases, the phrases imply personal messages from the king, which are addressed to apparent or potential enemies and opponents, who might challenge the king's right to accede to the throne. In this sense, these "battle names", which are the titles of Mosi kings, are

important contemporary records of history, explaining the circumstances of accession. The difficulty is that, because they are full of stereotyped allegories, it is inevitable that there are multiple interpretations, which are plausible for one name.

As for common people, adult men also choose their "battle name" at the time of coming of age. The "battle name" of commoners can be called "cultivation name (*koob-yuure*)" as well. During a wartime in the past, those names were called out in "drum language" or in loud verbal articulation by count musicians, in order to inspire their fighting spirit. This custom is preserved today for occasions where villagers work together in fields for sewing, cropping or whatever. The process of recitation in a loud voice is called "*soesda*", in the Mosi language. Part of "battle names" or "cultivation names" are passed on as "honorific name (*sondre*)" over many generations mainly through the patrilineal line of families. In daily life, a word from the "honorific name" is used as a sort of surname for a family. It sometimes happens that, when the name of a past king's mother is articulated in the process of oral tradition, the honorific name of the woman's "patri-lineage lineage (*buudu*)" is addressed.

Apart from the introductory part, which is called "solicitation for permission", and refrain of auspicious phrases, the main body, which is constructed on the recitation of kings' names, their parents and the narration, has features described in Table 1. For example, as for the first seven kings in the Table, all of them, except for the one in Section (4), have a one-word name, without an attached phrase as "battle name." In addition, there are notes for each king. In Chapter IV, there are several words sporadically articulated, which seem to be kings' names, although without sufficient verification. Some of the names coincide with names of chief who are believed, according to oral tradition, to have governed this area (*Moaaga*, *Tinoange*) long time ago. In Chapter III, kings in Sections (8) and (9) are referred to with a phrase which is their "battle name", whereas the one in Section (10) does not have any name expressed in a phrase. He is addressed with a brief ambiguous narrative, which can be interpreted in various ways. It is only those kings who fall in Chapter V and VI that can be clearly identified with "battle name", and in most cases, with their mother's name as well. As to the number of phrases, there are 842 phrases in Material (A), 75.2% of which (633 phrases) are in Chapter VI. Material (B) does not have many iterative descriptions about kings in Sections (25) and (27). Among 705 phrases in total, 489 phrases (69.4%) are in Chapter VI. The sum of phrases in Chapters V and VI accounts for as high as 82% of the total in Material (A), and 77.9% in Material (B).

The centerpiece of the whole text is the section where a reference is made to the establishment of capital in *Tānkvdgo* by King "*naab'a Sigri* (Beginning of Rainy Season)" in Section (16) and following developments in the kingdom. The citation of names of ancestors in Chapter V is also equally important. It would be fair to say that the preceding parts provides a context in which the historical developments in later years can be properly set. In 1966, shortly after I started the historical survey in *Tānkvdgo*, I had a chance to interview *Tarwēndpānga*, an old musician at



that time, who was still alive. Based on the verbatim account of what he told, I created a family tree of the present King "*naab'a Tigre* (Rich Harvest)." On the other hand, Father André Prost made a list of kings' names (Prost 1953) based on information which he had collected from the same source in 1953, when the Mosi community was still reigned by King *naab'a Kuba* (Orphan), the predecessor of King "*naab'a Tigre*." As a matter of fact, these two lists are identical, except for the sequence of two names in a collateral pedigree line. It happens that, as far as these two names are concerned, they appear in the opposite order in the two records.

By the way, there is another list of kings' names, which was compiled by a German ethnologist Leo Frobenius in 1908 (Frobenius 1912). In his survey, he collected information from preceding *Tarwēndpānga*, during the of King "*naab'a Koom* (Water)", who was the predecessor of *naab'a Kub*. When comparing the two aforementioned lists with the one by Frobenius, we find that, in the latter, there are 8 missing kings. They are the ones in Sections (6), (8), (9), (10), (11), (12), (13) and (15), under Chapters II, III, IV and V. They were kings of the Mosi, belonging to collateral lines of family tree, most of whom reigned the Kingdom when their capital was frequently relocated. (Among those in Chapter V, only King *naab'a Bugum* (fire) in Section (14), who established the capital in *Gōdgē*, is directly blood related to the kings of *Tānkvdgo* dynasty. He was the father of King "*naab'a Sigri*", the founder of the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty.)

Especially, the dynasty at *Zend-Goodē* in Chapter III was confronted with the *Tānkvdgo* for a long time. Both of them had a common ancestor, that is to say, King *naab'a Bugum* in Section (14), from whom they diverged. It is said that the festival to commemorate King *naab'a Bugum* (*Bugum yaogē*) used to be carried out separately by the two states. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a civil war inside *Tānkvdgo*, when the French army invaded the region. King "*naab'a Koom*", a son of King "*naab'a Karōngo* (Arrowhead)", arranged a military alliance with the French, from whom he assured sufficient support to stabilize his status as the head of the state. During his era, under the French colonial rule, *Zend-Goodē* became an administrative unit of *Tānkvdgo*. However, during the ritual of animal blood sacrifice on the grave of King *naab'a Bugum*, they used two different gourds recipient of semi-spherical shape, one for *Zend-Goodē* and the other for *Tānkvdgo*, from which they poured animal blood onto the tombstone. It was during this period when Frobenius gathered data for the compilation of list of kings. Following King *naab'a Koom*, his son, King *naab'a Kuba*, acceded to the throne. During his reign, the two gourds for the ritual were finally united into one. It is supposed that, around that time, *Tarwēndpānga*, a then the chief of court drummers who was famous for his wisdom and historical knowledge, incorporated the names of ancient kings of *Zend-Goodē* into the royal genealogy of *Tānkvdgo*. Currently, descendants of the royal family at *Zend-Goodē* are assured of the status of local chieftain, serving for the traditional community in that capacity. We should note that what has been integrated into the *Tānkvdgo* oral tradition is only

part of that of *Zend-Goodē*. The ritual for common ancestor used to be conducted separately by those two chieftaincies, when they were in confrontation. However, when one of the two powers overwhelmed the other at a later stage, the ritual was carried out by the dominant power, using two separate utensils. Then, it was followed by a new era, when the dominant state came to use only one utensil for the ceremony. By the same token, in the recitation itself, the dominant chieftaincy finally integrated the names of ancestors of the conquered (Material (A) was a record of sound at the festivity dedicated to King *naab'a Bugum*) into their oral history.

On the other hand, the chiefs of the *Tinoangē-Moaaga* dynasty in Chapter IV, who are not incorporated in Frobenius's list, were also diverged from the dynasty of *Kīnzīm* the common ancestor for both *Tānkvdgo* and *Tinoangē-Moaaga*. Before the French conquest, it had remained independent of *Tānkvdgo*. As for local rituals, their tradition and inherent practices were accommodated by the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty, which showed respect to *Tinoangē-Moaaga*.

What is interesting is their traditional performance called *kabsgo*, which is part of a royal ritual. Whereas in some passages of the recitation, a phrase, "Don't drink" is repeated. But in and their passage, a phrase "The Power (= the King) drinks, the Power (= the King) drinks" is iterated, and in response to that elicitation, the current king, who is present at the ceremony, drinks millet beer. The beer is served in a semi-spherical container made of a gourd by the chief of the protocol (*balem naaba*). King *naab'a Malka*, the founder of the *Tinoangē-Moaaga* dynasty, is referred to by a name "*Patōe-n-yūuda* (Don't drink)." This name, "*Patōe-n-yūuda*" is repeated six times with an interval of another passage. It seems that this passage represents some awe and respect towards the founder of this dynasty and his direct descendants. After the recitation of Chapter IV, the drummer repeats, "The king drinks" several times. It is as if the king would be released by this phase from the tension of awe, provoked by the preceding phrases. In reply, the king drinks beer for the first time in the ceremony. He does it again at the conclusion of addressing King *naab'a Bugum* in Section 16, Chapter V. In Chapter VI, the phrase of "The Power (= the King) drinks" is repeated twice, when the names of kings in Sections 16, 17, 19 and 21 are called out. It is also true of Sections 24 through 27 as well. (These particular scenes, where the names are called out and the present king drinks beer in response, are performed only in Material (A) which is the live recording at the ritual.) Those ancestors, during the recitation of whose names the current king drink, are all directly related to him. Kings in Sections 18, 20, 22 and 23, who are on collateral lines, are not referred to by the musicians. Nor does the king drinks beer when those names are cited.

Based on the observation above, we can understand that what is manifested with sounds in the first dimension is not the mere geographical the sense, but that it is "*topos*" in Greek, which is a representation of geo-politico-social relations among peoples through historical changes. As far as the verbal recitation in the sound is

concerned, it appears as a recording of the names of linear ancestors of the royal family. After more careful analysis of the process, however, it surfaces that the oral tradition, in fact, symbolizes the effort of a dominant dynasty to try to redefine, in retrospect, the past history from their own value and perspective in order to justify its dominant on the others. Before assuring their status of superiority, they had to undergo a tortuous passage in political scenes, such as diversion, relocation, conflict, confrontation, merger, integration and so on. The oral tradition of the final winner actually reflects all these processes, which are configured according to their values.<sup>2)</sup>

Interestingly enough, this review of history, which is translated into a series of sounds in the first dimension, is not associated with any time reference beyond a span of reign of each king, such as the Christian or islamic era. The *Tānkvdgo* history is not based on a time reference system which is used in Japan, for instance, where the sum of each era can be referred as a linear time scale. Thus, in the Mosi society, "plots" in history ("implotment", White 1973: 7-11; "intrigue", Ricoeur 1980; *do.* 1983: 287sq.) are not based on absolute time, but on the indicators of "*topos*" which reflect socio-politico relations.

The Mosi, as agricultural people, live in calibrated time (year = *yumde*), which is synchronized with regular cycles of agricultural activities (= *Kronos*). Their wish for the regeneration of good "*yumde*" is clearly reflected in the refrain of auspicious phrases in the ritual. It seems that, however, since they do not possess a reference system of absolute time, going beyond the span of king's reign, the expression of their history would depend on "plots" and "*topos*", than in the case of other peoples such as Europeans and the Japanese. As a matter of fact, this approach to time is even more accentuated among hunting people and nomads. Their involvement with "*Kronos*" is far more dilute than that of agricultural people. In other words, nomads are far more capable in conceptualizing time in relation to "*topos*" than those who reside in a fixed place. There is another striking difference between the two societies. The establishment of the Kingdom of Mosi required well established "history" to justify their prerogatives and regal authorities, whereas hunting and nomad communities did not have to bother such a centrally controlled polity. In their environment, especially in olden times, "*topos*" played a significant role as a yardstick of time than in the case of agricultural communities.<sup>3)</sup>

### 3. Structure of Oral History and Representation of Time

As I discussed before, in the historical narratives of *Tānkvdgo*, all the names of kings in Chapters III through VI, except for those in Sections 10 and 12, are referred to by a "war name", which is a phrase. It is contrasted with the introductory part, namely, Chapters I and II, where kings in Sections 1 through 7, except for that in Section 4 in Material (B), are all referred to by a single word, and not a phrase. In addition, those in Chapters I and II have some narration attached to their name.

In one of my past publications, I touched upon the difference of the way in which the royal lineage is described. I named one approach "History to Address", and the other "History to Refer To." (Kawada 1992 [1984]) In the case where a king's name consists of 1 word, it is referred to as a third party in narratives. On the other hand, when a king's name is a phrase, it is called out as a second person. I am going to elaborate on the structure of grammatical "person" in Chapter 4, explaining the difference between a "party who addresses (calls out)" and a "party who is addressed."

Before moving onto that subject, here I would like to concentrate on how time is manifested in the structure of oral tradition. Chapter II of Material (A) has a reference to King *Kimbo* (strong weed), who founded a dynasty of diversion in *Welgo*, after having a fight with his senior bother to try to catch a dagger, a symbol of regal power. He caught the sheath of dagger and became a king. His war name was in a phrase "Since a strong weed, which has amazing power is hiding itself behind piles of crops, the landlord should not be in hot haste to remove the blade from the handle of a plow." As far as the other three kings in Chapter II are concerned, their "war names" are not indicated in their entirety. It might be because "war names" of kings, who lived in olden days, have been forgotten somewhere in history, unless they were as direct and important ancestors as King *Kimbo*. It was the reason quoted by local court musicians whom I interviewed.

However, what is particularly noteworthy is that the three kings in Chapter I and that in Section 5, Chapter II are mentioned not only in the *Tānkvdgo* history but also in the royal lineage of the Ouagadougou dynasty. It was located in the middle Mosi region. They are King Zoungourana (*Zūngrāana*), which means a "person who has an audience chamber = Great Chieftain (*Zūngrāana*)", King *Wubri* (a pen for livestock), King *Soarba* (a horse with white legs) and King *Vure* (open space in a bushland). The local legend tells that Ouedroago (*Wedraogo*) (stallion) was the father of kings in Section 1 and 2. The name Ouedroago appears not only in orthodox oral tradition of royal ceremonies, but also in various local legends of nation building in the distant past, which are widely communicated among the aged in these societies. The legend regarding the initiation of nation is universally known among the Mosi, and not limited to the southern area. There are many variations in the legend.<sup>4)</sup> The following is the outline, which is commonly accepted among the Mosi:

Long time ago, the King of *Gāmbaaga* (in the north of present Ghana, approximately 200 km south of *Tānkvdgo*, a town which flourished with trade during the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) had a daughter called *Yēnenga* (slim woman), who was a strong and stout girl of masculine fortitude. Every time her father went on a military campaign, she accompanied him on a horseback, commanding a corps in the army. The king loved her so dearly that he did not allow her to marry, when she was grown up. One day, however, in the midst of a war, the horse, on which the princess was riding, suddenly started to dash out of control to wander off the battlefield, taking

her far away into a wasteland. In the wild, she encountered a hunter called *Riyaare* (person who eats anything), who was wandering around the area. Born from their encounter was a boy, and he was named *Wedraogo* (stallion). When he was grown up, *Nyennega* went back home with her son to see the King of *Gambago*. The father was extremely delighted to see them, giving a corps of warriors on a horseback to his grandson. With his men in the army, *Ouedroago* went up to the north, near where the Mosi live today.

*Ouedroago's* son was called *Zūngrāana* (person who has an audience chamber). He was an excellent military leader, achieving ruling power and fame for courage. In those days, an ethnic group called *Yōyōsi* lived in the northern region. They were suffering from frequent looting and atrocities by a neighbouring tribe called *Gurunsi*. The elder (*tēngsoaba* = priest of earth-cult) of the *Yōyōsi* presented his daughter to *Zūngrāana*, pleading him to marry her, so that a son from that union can be made king of *Yōyōsi* to protect his people in peace. This "*tēngsoaba*" was capable of exercising magic. Using the magical power, he caused a whirlwind in the air, which carried *Zūngrāana* into a pen to keep livestock in. Inside the building, his daughter *Pvgtoenga* (woman with a mustache) was waiting for her would-be husband. A son was born from their marriage, and he was named *Wubri* (pen), taking after the location where the union was consummated. His grandfather exercised magical power over *Wubri* to make him limp, thus unequivocally being identified. When grown up, *Wubri* made an excellent warrior, governing the native people of *Yōyōsi* to establish the Middle Kingdom of Mosi (a kingdom the capital of which was a town precedent to Ouagadougou). Other offspring of *Zūngrāana* founded the South Kingdom of Mosi (a kingdom the capital of which was a town precedent to *Tānkvdgo*).

This very legend about the origin of the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms is commonly accepted not only among the Mosi, but also in the Mamprusi society in the north of Ghana, although the names of characters and details differ to some extent from one version to another. Located in Mamprusi is *Gāmbaaga*, where, according to the legend, the princess used to live.

I carried out an extensive survey through interviews among Mosi and Mamprusi peoples to explore details of this nation-building legend. Interestingly enough, in their legend, priority is given to logical relations between the components and motif of the legend. On the other hand, temporal relations manifested in the tales, which can be translated into causality of phenomena in an chronological order, is only of secondary and paradigmatic nature. We can see that this secondary and paradigmatic nature is reflected in "groups of legends", a superstructure of individual legends, thus creating a sort of meta-structure in their

culture.

There are many variations over the region which reflect idiosyncratic elements (E) of local communities, showing different names of characters and locations. However, when it comes to the message delivered by motifs (M), which are configured by these elements, there is a common structure penetrating those variations. This particular observation can be corroborated by categorizing groups of legends as follows:

- E1 E2 Extraordinary daughters (E1: Princess *Yēnenga* who was a courageous warrior E2: *Pvgtoenga*, daughter of "*tēngsoaba*", who has a mustache)
- E3 E4 Strong aliens (E3: A wandering hunter, *Riaare* [Hunters are considered to be superhuman, being extremely knowledgeable about the spirits and capabilities of wild animals and plants.] E4: King *Zūngrāana*, who has extreme military and political power)
- M1 "*Tēngsoaba*", the father of E2, pleaded with E4 to protect his people from plunder by one of the neighbouring tribes.
- M2 M3 There is a union between E1 and E3 as well as E2 and E4. Their union is consummated in an extraordinary location, that is to say, the wilderness for the former case, and a livestock pen for the latter. (M2 = E1 and E3; M3 = E2 and E4)
- E5 E6 Sons who were born from the union of M2 and M3. They were named after what brought about the marriage between their parents. (E5: *Wedraogo*; E6: *Wubri*)
- M4 M5 E3 and E4 constructs a new kingdom. (M4: In the former case, the father of E1 supports that undertaking. M5: In the latter situation, a new kingdom is established through collaboration between E4 and the father of E2.) [In the Middle Kingdom of Mosi, "*tēngsoaba*" served in the community as director of rituals (*balem naaba*). He played a complementary role for the politico-military leader (*tēngnaaba*).]

When we trace a series of legends further back to the days before the nation building of Mamprusi, the capital of which was *Gāmbaaga*, we can discover the following tale:

Long time ago, a brave one-eyed hunter called *Tohajiye* (red hunter) came over to the Kingdom of Male. When the hunter got rid of a single-horned wild ox living around a village pond, which kept killing people who came to collect water, he was deeply appreciated by the King. Later he went back to the wilderness to live on his own. When a neighbouring country invaded Male, *Tohajiye* rescued the country from a losing war in response to the King's request for help. To express sincere gratitude, the King offered to *Tohajiye* one of his daughters. *Tohajiye* chose a daughter, who was

crippled and could not but crawl about, to marry. He went back home in the wild with his wife, and a son (*Kpogonumbo*) was born between them. An arm and a leg were missing at birth in *Kpogonumbo*. He grew up to be an enormous and extremely horrendous-looking man. One of the eyes was continuously bleeding. After the death of his father, *Kpogonumbo* set off for a journey on his own toward the west. When he arrived in the Kingdom of *Gurma*, he exercised magical power, thereby growing African millet ripe within a second. He harvested the millet, from which he brewed alcoholic beverage. The head of land (*tēngsoaba*) was so impressed with his magical power that he offered one of his daughters to marry him. On a festival day, he made his wife drink wine which he had made, and induced her to disclose the secret of fetishes of his father-in-law. Given the knowledge, he murdered the *tēngsoaba*. Putting on the hood and clothes of his father-in-law, which were the symbol of status of *tēngsoaba*, *Kpogonumbo* declared to the people in Gurma that he had acceded to the title of *tēngsoaba*. The King of *Gurma* (*tēngnaaba*) challenged him, and a war was started. However, the King was defeated in the war, and he offered one of his daughters to *Kpogonumbo*. A son was born from this marriage, who became King *Gbewa* later. One of the sons of King *Gbewa* went over to *Gbewa*, where he established the Kingdom of *Mamprusi*, whereas another son travelled further down to the south, where he founded the Kingdom of *Dagomba*.

We can analyze the elements and motifs in the afore-mentioned legend as follows:

- E7 Strong alien (*Tohajiye*)
- E8 Monstrous animal which conquered the source of water supply for the community (single-horned wild ox)
- M6 E7 exterminates E8, thus restoring the source of water supply for the community
- E9 Extraordinary daughter (young crippled girl)
- M7 Consummation of the union between E7 and E9 at an extraordinary location (wasteland)
- E10 Strong alien, *Kpogonumbo*, is born as a son from the marriage M7
- E11 Daughter of the head of land (*tēngsoaba*)
- M8 E10 brings about crops and wine by exercising magical power.
- M9 Consummation of the union between E10 and E11
- M10 E10 murders the father of E11, who is *tēngsoaba*, thus taking over the fetishes. As a result, E10 declares his accession to the title of *tēngsoaba*. Moreover, there is another legend, which is about the birth of Kingdom of Hausa in the east. It is believed to have been the native country of *Tohajiye*. The outline is as follows:

Long time ago, a young brave man named *Bayajitta*, who came from the east and wandered about many places, got rid of a giant snake, which lived in the

village pond, killing people. Thanks to his achievement, the water source for the community was restored again. The queen of the kingdom married him as a token of her gratitude. They had six sons between them, who established six states of the Kingdom of Hausa. (The remaining country was founded by another son of *Bayajitta*, who was from his former marriage with a woman in *Bornu*.)

E12 Strong alien (*Bayajitta*)

E13 Monstrous animal which occupied the source of water supply in a community (giant snake).

M11 E12 kills E13, thus restoring people's access to water to save the community.

E14 Local queen

M12 E14 marries E12

E15 Sons from the matrimonial union of M12

M13 E15 creates a new kingdom

From these observations of a group of nation-building legends, it is revealed that the ways in which the messages of legends are structured are overlapping each other. Of course, there is slight discrepancy and variation among them as well. Through this structure, a meta-message emerges. In summary, the outline of message is as follows:

"A strong alien (E3, E4, E7, E10 and E12) rescues local residents from atrocities (M1, M6 and M11), or brings about plentiful food for them (M8). He marries a daughter of chieftain's or the queen of local kingdom (M2, M3, M7, M9 and M12). While provided for support by his father-in-law (M4 and M5), he establishes a new kingdom. In other cases, he steals power from his father-in-law (M10) to create his nation."

While maintaining some difference and variation, a large part of the main message is commonly carried in these nation-building legends, such as the one about King *Sunjaata* the Great of the Mali Empire or those of West Africa. (Frobenius 1925) The content of these meta-messages is sufficiently plausible and sensible to make "historical" narratives. In the light of the reality of nature and society in West Africa, they are quite plausible.

Let us streamline the names in royal lineage and those in ancient legends about the origin of kingdoms. In particular, I focus on those which comprise one single word, instead of multiple words. The list is as follows:

- a) Kings in Sections 1 and 2 in Chapter 1
- b) Princess *Yēnenga* of *Gāmbaaga* (meaning "thin woman", daughter who fights in a war on a horseback, extraordinary girl, woman of masculine fortitude)
- c) Wandering hunter
- d) *Wedraogo* (stallion) who was born between *Yēnenga* and the hunter
- e) *Tēngsoaba* of aborigines called *Yōyōsi*



- f) *Pvgtoenga*, daughter of *tēngsoaba* of *Yōyōsi* (meaning “woman with a mustache”, extraordinary daughter, masculine girl)
- g) *Zūngrāana* (meaning “person who has an audience chamber”, great chieftain)
- h) *Wubri* (livestock pen), son between *Zūngrāana* and *Pvgtoenga*, implying that the consummation was carried out at an extraordinary place

It is cited in the oral tradition of *Tānkvdgo* genealogy that *Pvgtoenga* married *Zūngrāana*, to give a birth to a child called *Wubri*. It signifies that, although not incorporated in orthodox narratives, the legends of Princess *Yēnenga* of *Gāmbaaga* and historical developments afterwards are known to court musicians in *Tānkvdgo*.)

The above-mentioned characters in old legends have a name which contains only one word. It is not that, because they lived in the distant past, some words were lost from original phrases over time, but that their names, which are common nouns, carry a certain meaning, thus supporting the structure of messages of legends as its component.

It would be more correct to think that those kings were given such names in order to support the structure of legendary messages as its component, than to speculate that they existed in reality with those names. As a matter of fact, we can identify a similar situation in the way in which Japanese deities are named. They appear in Volume 1 of *Kojiki* (Japan's oldest extant chronicle).

Kings in Sections 3 and 5 also have one word as their name. Their mothers' names are indicated in the *Tānkvdgo* royal lineage, which are identical to those in the royal genealogy in the Middle Mosi region. The problem is, however, that those names are not considered to be structural components of the messages in nation-building legends, which I have described. Are they simply the names of those who actually existed in history as common ancestors for both *Tānkvdgo* and *Ouagadougou*? Or do they bear some legendary messages in a different way than the previous examples? We need to study this theme further before reaching a conclusion.

In *Kojiki*, the names of characters in Volume 1 bear a meaning, thus functioning as a structural component of those myths. In Volume 2, the genealogy starts with “*Kami yamato iware hiko no mikoto*” (the Emperor *Jinmu*). In this book are indicated the names of generations of Japanese Emperors, time and place of their birth, contribution and achievement, year of death, location of their grave and so forth. The names and narratives are the centrepiece of this book. (It is also pointed by researchers that what is written about these ages includes myths as well as facts.) Volume 3 starts with tales of the Emperor *Nintoku*, who lived in Japan after the introduction of Confucianism. Both *Kojiki* and the oral tradition of royal genealogy of the Mosi share the same way in which the nature of stories is gradually shifted from the story-telling of mythical age to historical narratives about the less distant past. It can be defined as a transition from “myth” to “history.” In the

former, messages are born by a paradigmatic structure, which is constructed on semantic elements. On the other hand, in the latter, contingencies are depicted as what is unforeseeable in a syntagmatic context.

#### 4. Situation of Grammatical "Person" in Oral History

In the previous chapter, I discussed the structure of oral tradition. Here, I would like to focus on how the originator and recipient are related to each other in the context of oral tradition. Furthermore, I am interested in how those two groups of people are related to those who are referred to in historical narratives. As I mentioned before, it is a carefully formatted narration, in which drums and human voice are used for articulation.

At the beginning, court musicians, as the originator, face the current king and audience, thus identifying their position vis-à-vis the congregation. They address a question to the king, which is articulated using a second person in the form. Following that, they reply the question themselves, announcing the names of ancestors of the royal family. Although the nominal recipient of citing is the king, it is in fact addressed to several hundred participants in the audience. The primary purpose of this ritual is to announce in public the legitimacy of royal lineage and sovereign power. At the same time, by assuring the participation of large audience, which includes many senior members of the community who are versed in history and genealogy, any attempt to arbitrarily manipulate or change the content, if any at all, can be effectively contained.

As discussed in the previous part, kings' names in Chapters I and II, except for that in Section 4, have a single common noun, which functions as a proper noun. They are also accompanied by narration. On the other hand, unlike those in earlier days, kings' names from Chapter III and onward comprise narrative phrases, which are made of a sequence of common nouns. They are articulated in the form of "summon (calling out)." The text evidences a process of transformation from the age of "myths" in Chapter I to the stage of "history" in Chapters V and VI, via the intermediate phase of II, III and IV. Between the starting and ending points, there is an apparently contradictory shift from a "description of deeds or incidents", which is a "narration about proper nouns", to the "addressing" of proper nouns (summon), which consist of "narratives using common nouns." It is believed that drum beat (*bendre*) has magical power to resurrect the deceased to the scene of rituals. Therefore, it is supposed that ancestors are also present at the ceremony, when drums are beaten. In this sense, this act of addressing ancestors' names in the Mosi tradition can be compared to the ritual of *Shuuji-kai* at *Todaiji* Temple in Nara, Japan, where Buddhist monks read in unison the list of names of the deceased, whose souls are enshrined in there.

It should be noted, however, that this shift from "description of deeds" to "summon" does not occur without some twisting. For instance, the part regarding King *Kuba* (orphan) shows the largest number of narratives and "war names", the

latter of which is in the form of “summon.” It reads, “When the orphan rode on an elephant, his enemies cried in frustration and jealousy, whereas his supporters were laughing happily.” Although this phrase, which comprises only common nouns, is a non-specific narrative, it carries the nature of proper noun, thus being used as a “summon.” It is true of other kings in Chapters V and VI.

On the other hand, there is another phrase, which reads, “The ‘orphan’ king is a silver flint. When hit, it glows radiantly. With more hitting, it is ignited to make fire.” It is a narrative about a proper noun, which has been extracted from the former “description of deeds.”

Moreover, in Section 1, there is a phrase, which reads, “King *Zūngrāana* says, ‘Those households which do not accept me will decay.’” A phrase in Section 2 reads, “King *Zūngrāana* had a son, who became King *Wubri*, from the matrimonial union with *Pvgtoenga*.” Both phrases are narratives about proper nouns, which consist of common nouns (*Zūngrāana* means “person who has an audience room”, whereas *Wubri* means a “livestock pen”) and do not have “war names” as phrases. On this point, there is a distinctive contrast between these phrases and most phrases in Chapter VI, which are “summon” or “address”, using specific names for individual people. These specific names in Chapter VI are phrases, which take the form of “phrases based on a series of common nouns.”

At the beginning of ritual, the court musicians, as the originator, identify themselves as a first party vis-à-vis the recipients, before moving onto the main part of recitation. This custom is found not only in the citation of royal lineage, but also in the presentation of many tales, songs, poems and so forth in Sub-Saharan Africa. In the case of *Tānkvdgo*, the first 74 phrases in Material (A) and 55 phrases in Material (B) are for “solicitation of forgiveness (*kabsgo*)”, which I described. In particular, a phrase “I (sometimes “we” as polite expression) am dressed up in formal garments to walk towards the royals, in order to pay homage to the child of Queen *Rogemyud*” is repeated several times.

It is a striking feature of their oral tradition that the status of originator (story-teller) is explicitly articulated as opposed to the audience. It is sharply contrasted with the way in which *The Tale of the Heike* is cited in Japan. In the latter case, there is no indication of “person” about the story-teller. On the other hand, in the former case, by means of explicitly identifying the story-teller, a common arena (“topos”) can be created between the originator and the recipient (audience). When the “arena” is set forth, the spirits of royal ancestors, who are the subject of story-telling, can be summoned to the same place, through the act of calling their names. Their names are addressed in a loud voice, taking the form of a phrase, which is a “war name” as well as “name for commendations (auspicious name).” Human voice is accompanied by loud drum beat. The point is that, through all these protocols, the current king, who is also one of the recipients, can be renamed and presented with admiration from his subjects.

In summary, it would be fair to say that the story-teller articulates the names of ancestors of the recipient, thereby presenting words of admiration to the recipient,

who is honoured to be affiliated with such a long-lasting prestigious lineage. In fact, we can find similar custom in the Mande society, which is located to the northwest of the Mosi region. Traditionally, the Mande has a professional group of story-tellers (*jeli*, or "griot" in French), who usually marry only among the group members. In their case, *jeli* identifies himself vis-à-vis the audience, thus introducing himself in the first place. In this way, an arena is set forth for citing stories = commendations. After that, he "renames" the listener, by addressing his ancestors' names.

## 5. Past and Present in Oral History

Here, in this chapter, based on the observation of time structure and reference to grammatical "person", which I have described, I would like to focus on how the past is manifested in the oral tradition of royal genealogy as opposed to the present time.

Once I tried to conceptualize the relations between the present and the past in the context of oral tradition of historical nature, which has somewhat specific style and format. To this end, I introduced two contrasting concepts. One is "epic poetry", and the other is "chronicle." This differentiation is primarily focused on the "orientation" of the content, rather than on specific forms or features of oral history.<sup>5)</sup> Table 3 shows main characteristics of these two "orientations."

Before reaching these two concepts, I had scrutinized various chronicles in West Africa. One is the "Legend of Life of King *Sunjaata* the Great", which is about the founder of the Mali Empire, a legendary hero in this area. It was compiled based on the oral tradition collected from "*jeli*" in the *Mande* society. *Mande* people live along the Niger River in West Africa. I note that this record is more strongly characterized as "epic poems." The other sample group includes chronicles of a series of kings in Hausa states, which are located to the southeast of the Niger Bend. The most representative text is the "Chronicle of *Kano*." This group of oral history is more clearly oriented toward "chronicles."

Although both groups are characterized that they deal with historical developments in West Africa, one of them was eventually compiled in written language, while the other was not. I trust, therefore, that this approach to distinguish "epic poetry" from "chronicle" in terms of orientation, which I proposed in the past, can be universally applicable to the classification of oral tradition, beyond the geographical demarcation of West Africa. Whether a society is with or without written language, this approach can be applied.

In the Mosi rituals, as I explained in the previous chapter, spirits of ancestors are summoned by the sound of drums and human voice. Through this protocol, adoration is expressed for the present king. In this sense, therefore, it would be fair to say that they have the nature of "epic poems." Obviously, in this process, the past is reincarnated in the present time. Having said so, however, it is also true that, as far as the relations between the story-teller and listeners are concerned, the

Table 3

<i>Nature of Epic Poetry:</i>	<i>Nature of Chronicles:</i>
Based on "the oral composition"	Narratives immutable
No written text available	Told as if there was written texts available
Audience as customers for the performance	Both the story-teller and audience are a first party in the situation.
Presence of a epic community	They have interest in the reliability or truthfulness of what is told.
Adoration, commemoration, consolation for a soul (emotional)	Narration, recording (intellectual)
Importance of direction of performance	Transmission of information, importance of "performative"
Beauty as artistic performance	character of the utterance, respect to facts
When registered in written language, most of the value of oral tradition would be lost	Even if registered in written language, essentially unchanged, compatible with letters
Presence of "I" as a story-teller in front of the audience. The performance is heavily dependent on surrounding circumstances.	Absence of "I", as a story-teller. The Performance does not heavily depend on surrounding circumstances
The story-teller identifies himself with the past which he is talking about. By addressing the past with his own voice, he resuscitates it to the present time. (nullifying absolute time in history)	The story-teller externalizes the present to move it into the past (importance of actual times when historical events took place).

nature of Mosi rituals is distinctively of "chronicles." This point can be made very clear, when we compare the *Tānkvdgo* ceremony with the "Record of Life of King *Sunjaata* the Great" in *Mande*, which is cited by *jeli*. As is the case of the Mosi, the legendary past is resurrected in the mind of *Mande* people via *jeli*. I classify this Record as an "epic poem" instead of "chronicle", because, in this context, listeners are not descendants of the King. Nor are they "directly involved" with what is being told. Another important difference is that, in the *Mande* tradition, there is no reference to how the present listeners are genealogically related to King *Sunjaata*. For these reasons, I define the *Mande* tradition as an "epic poem", whereas that of the Mosi as a "chronicle."

In summary, the oral tradition of royal genealogy in the Mosi society is an official ritual, through which the present monarch is able to reiterate in public the legitimacy of his sovereign power, thus convincing his people to accept it. The regal authority needs such endorsement based on legitimate history. All the protocols in the performance are aimed at emphasizing the fact that the present king is the only legitimate successor to the throne, as a natural member of the prestigious family, which is the subject of the oral history. Simultaneously at stake is the prerogatives of senior courtiers and high ranking officials who serve for the king. Their prestige in society is ensured through their involvement with the royal authority. In this sense, they are also directly affiliated with the content of oral history. Naturally, they place themselves in a situation where they solemnly take whatever is told in the citation as the truth. In so far as the royal genealogy is used as an vehicle to assure the vested interest of the king and his men, it is inevitable that the oral history has attributes of a "chronicle."

I should emphasize that the concepts or "Ideal Typus" which I proposed in Table 3 are, after all, the orientation of those texts. The problem is that the features of neither "epic poetry" nor "chronicles" are identifiable, to the extent that the other features can be neglected, in the oral tradition of the *Mande*, the *Hausa* and others. In fact, the oral history of the Mosi royal family itself carries both orientations, in mixture, fairly strongly.

## 6. Tense and Aspect in Oral History

The next question is, in the Mosi tradition of citation of royal lineage, which has the aforementioned structure and orientation, how "tense" and "aspect" are used in the process.

When dealing with this subject, I would rather put aside a well-known controversial issue in linguistics of how universal and valid the concepts of "tense" and "aspect" are in the light of the world's languages, which derived from linguistic studies in the West. Here I would like to see what would happen, if I apply these two concepts to the Mosi language (*moore*).

The Mosi language does not recognize "tense" as the conjugation of verb. Instead, it has two sets of "aspect." They are "punctual" vis-à-vis "durative" and

"perfective" vis-à-vis "imperfective." Needless to say, temporal relations, such as "before", "after" and so forth, can be manifested by using auxiliary verbs, particles of nature of verbs or combination of multiple verbs.

Auxiliary verbs and particles of verb nature, which are used to express relative relationship of time regarding "state" or "act" are as follows:

- (a) [auxiliary verbs to show anteriority]:  
*denge* "first of all..... do"  
*pīnde* "at the beginning..... do"  
 [particles]:  
*da, dag* "used to be..." "used to do..."  
 [These can express "immediate past" by combining other verbs such as *wa* (come) and *sa* (finish).]
- (b) [auxiliary verbs to express "posteriority"]:  
*yawle* "following that, ..... do"  
 [verbs]:  
*na* to express "immediate past" including the subject's will  
*doge* to express lineage and origin. "[mother]...give a birth to.."  
 "[father]...has...as his child"  
*sige* "....be a descendant of..." "....be derived from..."  
 [noun]:  
*yaaba, yaabrāmba* (pl.) "ancestor"  
*yagenga, yagense* (pl.) "descendant"

All these words and usage frequently appear in the oral history of the Mosi.

I have examined how these auxiliary verbs and particles, which indicate temporal relationship in terms of "tense" and "aspect", are used in the texts of (A) and (B). I analyzed it by section in Table 1. In the overview, it is apparent that "punctual aspect" is overwhelmingly dominant, and that it has a function to state the truth in general sense. On the other hand, "perfective" and "imperfective" aspects are prominent in Sections 1, 2, 3, 5 and 12. It is also the case for the usage of verbs which are accompanied by particles to express temporal relationship. In other words, in Sections 1, 2, 3, 5 and 12, temporal relations and movement are made more explicit than in other Sections.

It is within a scope of time that phenomena and events are narrated in story-telling. For this reason, generally speaking, the above-mentioned expressions prevail in many contexts. What is worth noting is that there is difference between those Sections of the Mosi oral history regarding the question of how "aspect" of verbs is used. When closely reviewed, it becomes clear that this difference coincides, by and large, with the distinction between Sections with "narratives for a single-word name" and those with "addressing of names that are made of phrases." I elaborated on this differentiation before. We can suspect that, because, in the

latter case, "war-names" in phrases take the form of maxim, expressing the truth in general, naturally "punctual aspect" of verbs are more prominently used.

Now let us examine in more detail the "aspect" of verbs, content of oral history, and how they are related to each other.

Section 2 is a striking example, in which "narratives about a single-word name" appear so frequently. The following is a written version of this part from Material (A). (As far as this part is concerned, there is no difference between (A) and (B).)

- [98] naab a zūngrāan *doga* naab a wubr ye
- [99] a *ra bee* ne a pvgtoenga
- [100] naab a wubr *nomd* kāad ye
- [101] *nomd* kāad n *na* n *maneg* bāmba
- [102] naab a wubr *sigda* zuvse
- [103] n *yawl* n *wēend* n *segd* sabalbo
- [104] naab a wubr saraog yoore
- [105] bāmb *yāgd* goalem woo
- [106] a sa n *kong* ned yaa
- [107] a na ti *babl* tiiga
- [108] t'a yīng *na* n *maag* yaa

*English Translation:*

- [98] King *Zūngrāana* (person who has an audience chamber) had a son, who became King *Wubri* (livestock pen).
- [99] *Zūngrāana* was together with *Pvgtoenga* (woman with a mustache). (He had a son from the union with *Pvgtoenga*.)
- [100] King *Wubri* could soften (crush, soften up, persuade) rigid (obstinate) things.
- [101] He crushed rigid things to save people from suffering.
- [102] "Awe" and "fear" was embodied in King *Wubri*.
- [103] He was determined to be the cause of calamities.
- [104] King *Wubri* himself was the phallus (lightning) from the heaven (heaven = rain).
- [105] The lightning glowed bright, undulating in the sky.
- [106] When he could not find human beings,
- [107] He groped about trees.
- [108] Thus he cooled the heat in the body.

Italicized words in the text are verbs, auxiliary verbs and verb particles. As far as "aspect" is concerned, they are used in the following manner:

- [98] [*doga*]: "Perfective" aspect of *doge* (bear a child, generate), *doge* indicates parental (father, mother) relations. *Doga* represents an act which was complete once and all in the past.
- [99] [*ra bee*]: *ra* (da) is a particle which shows anteriority as against other verbs.



*be* (there is) is an infinitive of verb. With this phrase, it is made clear that *Züngrāana* and *Pvgtoenga* had been united before the act *doga* in [098].

[100–101]

[*nomd*]: *nomd* is *nomda* without its suffix. *nomda* is “imperfective aspect” for direct narrative of *nome* (crumple, crush, soften up).

[*na*]: Verb particle which shows the “future” and “intention.” *maneg* is an infinitive of a verb *manege* (adjust, sort out, resolve). *n* is a connective particle, which connects multiple verbs or verbs and auxiliary verbs. The combination of *maneg* and *n* indicates the “posteriority” as against the aforementioned verb *nomda*.

[102] [*sigda*]: “Imperfective aspect” of the verb “*sige*” (be derived from) (be a copy (descendant, reproduction) of...). Direct narrative.

[103] [*yawl(e)*]: Verb particle, As opposed to *sigda*, it introduces a verb which indicates “posteriority” meaning “following that . . .” and “as a result”, together with *n*.

[*wēenda*]: “Imperfective aspect” of the verb *wēene* (make up a mind, pledge), direct narrative

[*segda*]: “Imperfective aspect” of the verb “*sege*” (coincide with, be assimilated with), direct narrative

[104] There is no verb.

[105] [*yagd*]: “Imperfective aspect” of the verb “*yage*” (shine). Here it is used to signify “customary acts.”

[106] [*konge*]: “Punctual aspect” of “*konge*” (lack)

[107] [*babl*]: Infinitive of “*bable*” (grope)

[108] [*na n maag*]: *na* shows posteriority against the previous verb “*bable*.” *n* is a connective particle. *maag* is an infinitive of the verb *maag* (*e*) (cool down, remove heat).

Section 2 about Wubri is an 11-line phrase. There are 16 verbs, auxiliary verbs and temporal particles in total. The break down is one “punctual”, four “infinitive forms” which cannot be distinguished from “punctual” by their form, one “perfective”, six “imperfective” and four “particles of nature of verb.”

In contrast, in Sections where phrases of “war names” are used for summoning the characters in oral history, “punctual” and “infinitive form of verb” are dominant. For instance, the following shows the first seven phrases about King *Bugum* (fire), who governed the Mosi right before the settlement of capital in *Tānkvdgo*. During and after his reign, the *Tānkvdgo* dynasty thrived and advanced their dominance rapidly over the region. In the present time, the Mosi pay homage to his spirit in a ceremony once a year. (The content of Materials (A) and (B) is identical. Since (B) is better organized than (A) in terms of location of phrase ends, I quote (B)).

- [242] paga la a tũ saaga *roga* naab a tugar *zab* ne bugum  
 [243] bugum yaa  
 [244] komber *zĩ* ne yũre  
 [245] gomtikvdg *long* boko  
 [246] ti wobg *na* n *lvi* n *tẽre*  
 [247] koom *peeg* beedo  
 [248] bāmb kongdeb *na* n *yōng* n *yũ*.

*English Translation:*

- [242] Your ancestor is a King "Bush challenges fire to fight with it." He was born from a Queen "Following rain."  
 [243] Concerned about "fire"  
 [244] Were chieftains who serve the King. They sit, carefully watching the "fire."  
 [245] A cunning chameleon jumps across a hole.  
 [246] However, an elephant will fall into the hole to break its neck.  
 [247] Water flows, carrying evil on the surface.  
 [248] Nevertheless, those who are thirsty scoop water in their hands to drink it.

Here are three "war names" of King *Bugum* appearing in series.

- [242] *roga*: Like the previous case, it is "perfective aspect" of "*roge*", which means "a mother gives a birth to a child. It is a typical expression in the recitation of royal lineage, in which kings' mothers, and in some cases fathers, are referred to.  
 [243] *zab* "Punctual aspect" of "*zab*" meaning (challenge someone to fight)  
 [244] *zĩ* "Punctual aspect" Although "punctual", rather than meaning an act which takes place once and for all, it signifies a state of "being in a sitting position."  
 [245] *long* "Punctual aspect" of the verb "*longe*" (jump across), signifying an act which occurs once and for all  
 [246] *na lvi tẽre na* is a particle of nature of verb to express the future. *lvi* means "to fall", while *tẽre* means "to break a bone." Both of them are infinitive forms.  
 [247] *peeg* "Punctual aspect", meaning "to fall together"  
 [248] *na yōng yũ* Following *na*, infinitive forms "*yōng*" (scoop) and *yũ* (drink) appear.

We should not ignore, however, that there are some cases where verbs in phrases of "war names" to describe universal truth are "imperfective aspects", instead of "punctual." For example, let us examine phrases of "war name" of King *Kub* (orphan) in Section 27, who was the father of the present king at *Tānkvdgo*. This one-word name "*Kub*" derived from his "war name." Material (A), which is identical to (B), reads:

- [804]    *knɪb zomb wobgo*  
 [805]    *ti beemdāmb kumd sūur ye*  
 [806]    *sōmbdāmb laad mogna*

*English Translation:*

- [804]    When the orphan rode astride of an elephant,  
 [805]    His enemies wept in jealousy and frustration,  
 [806]    His friends laughed with joy.  
 [804]    *zomb(e)* "Punctual", meaning "to sit astride"  
 [805]    *kumd* "Imperfective" of *kvmi* which means "to weep"  
 [806]    *laad* "Imperfective" of *laa* which means "to laugh"

The "imperfective aspect" in [805] and [806] plays an important role to express the consequence of an act, which is described in "punctual", in a lively manner, as if it were the case of the present progressive form. As is evident in the phrases above, "imperfective" is an effective tool to give a lively impression to expressions, especially when phrases with "punctual" and "infinitive forms" sound too general, making them boring.

King *Kub* is addressed with various "war names", which are phrases. The one-word name "*Kub*" is also accompanied by "narratives for proper nouns." One of the examples is found in Material (A) ([791]–[793]).

- [791]    *naab a knɪb yaa wanzurf bugbānga*  
 [792]    *tēgd a t'a zēnd yaa*  
 [793]    *sā n dāmb t'a widgi*

*English Translation:*

- [791]    King *Kub* (orphan) is a silver flint  
 [792]    When hit, he grows stronger.  
 [793]    If challenged further, he is ignited to make fire.  
 [791]    *yaa*: "Attributive verb", "Deficiency verb", "to be"  
 [792]    *tēgd(a)*: "Imperfective" of "*tēge*" (consult with), direct narrative  
           *zēnd(a)*: "Imperfective" of "[793] *zēne*" (to become stronger), direct narrative  
 [793]    *dāmb*: "Punctual" of *dāmbe* (shake, provoke), direct narrative  
           *widgi*: "Punctual", "to be ignited", direct narrative

We understand that phrases in this section are realistic depiction of the King, who is referred to in a third person, from the point of view of the story-teller, (although the actual story-teller is a musician and merely technical medium to pass on the messages to listeners).

Let us review other narratives about King *Kub*. (Numbering is based on

Material (A). However, (B) is also the same as (A).)

- [833] samandē zīgē soab a ābga
- [834] ābrapoll sor bāgande
- [835] bāmb *da nonga* naab a zomb wobg wīndtoog yaa
- [836] n kuud yungo
- [837] ti ned ka *na* n bāng ye
- [838] naab a zomb wobg sēn *wa* n bāng yaa
- [839] ti *lebg* yānde
- [840] sēn zoet a yānd pār tēng n kē yaa

*English Translation:*

- [833] *Ābga* (leopard), chieftain of the region of *Samandē* (front garden of a palace) [of *Tānkvdgo*]
- [834] "A young leopard hid himself behind trees." ("war name" of *Ābga*)
- [835] He pledged his allegiance during the day to a king "who sat astride on an elephant."
- [836] Later, during the night, he was secretly wandering about without being noticed by villagers. (He conspired against the king.)
- [837] He trusted that nobody would find it.
- [838] However, when the king "who rode astride on an elephant" discovered this plan of treason,
- [839] He was deeply humiliated.
- [840] Those who feared most the shame of themselves ripped the earth, cutting it open, and hiding themselves underground.

Right before this section, there is an account about one of the two high-ranking officials of the *Tānkvdgo* administration, whose status was superior to that of the Chieftain of *Samandē*. He is the chief of rear guard (*Dāmpōore*). That account was identical to the aforementioned phrases except for those in [840] and afterward. It can be interpreted that, in this particular section, two high-ranking officials of the *Tānkvdgo* regime (they are also kingmakers who select a successor to the throne among candidates) are criticized and reprimanded in public for their conducts. For this purpose, they are identified with their "war names." In addition, King *Kub* himself is also pointed in a third person.

These "accounts" are made from a perspective of the story-teller. In this type of "narration", "aspects" of verbs are also diversified.

- [834] *sor(e)*: "Punctual", direct narrative, verb to construct "war name", "to hide"
- [835] *zomb(e)*: "Punctual", direct narrative, verb to construct "war name", "to sit astride on"

Both [834] and [835] are part of a person's name. For this reason, they are somewhat detached from the narrative itself.

- [835] *da nonga*: Combination of a particle “*da*” which means “anteriority” and the “Perfective” of “*nonge*” (to love), “*da*” shows the temporal “anteriority” vis-à-vis “*kvvd(a)* < *kvv* (to walk stealthily, bending the body low) (Imperfective) in [836]
- [836] *kvvd(a)*: As discussed in [835]. The note about Chieftain in *Samandē* is preceded by a note about the chief of Dāmpōore at *Tānkvdgo*. These notes depict the same thing. The language in *Samandē*, which corresponds to [836], reads, “*n yawl n kuud yungo*.” In this case, “*yawl(e)*”, a particle of nature of verb, which indicates temporal “posteriority” (“thereafter”), is used in connection with “*da*” in [835].
- [837] *na n bāng*: “Infinitive” form of the verb “*bāng*” (to know). It represents a “forecast of the future”, which can be envisaged from the time of “*kuud(a)*”, which is “Imperfective.” “*na*” is a particle of nature of verb to refer to the future. “*n*” is a connective particle among multiple verbs.
- [838] *zomb(e)*: Same as [835]  
*wa n bāng*: Verb “*wa*” (to come) is used as if it were an auxiliary to express “immediate past” or “perfective.” It means that “King *Kub* will find it out.” It is juxtaposed with the future prediction in [837].
- [839] *lebg(e)*: “Infinitive form”, “...going to be in the state of...”, It is followed by the “imperfective” of “*zoet*” < “*zoe*” (to fear), to construct a phrase which means “those who fear the shame on themselves.” In its subordinate clause, as a narration of general truth, “*pār(e)*” (to rip, to tear) and “*kē*” (to sneak into) are used in the “punctual aspect.”

We can clearly understand that, as is the case in other parts of this oral history, the “description of proper noun”, which is the name “*Kub*” here, involves “various times”, and that they are represented through verbs, auxiliary verbs and particles, which delineate various “aspects” as well as the “anteriority” and “posteriority” between times.

## 7. Conclusion

Based on the observation which I have described, I can point out the following as to how space and time are manifested in “historical narratives” in the recitation of royal lineage of the Ancient Mosi Kingdoms (*Tānkvdgo* dynasty).

- (1) Time and space represented in oral history are not the projection of time and geographical space in reality, in which people lived in the past. Rather, they are, literally, a “re-presentation” of time and space, which are reviewed from a perspective of those who “would need history.” It is a result of effort to try to redefine the past from the present perspective, thus giving the past a meaningful depth of time and width of space. The oral history is so constructed as to fit to the perspective and the method of representation.

- (2) Names in the oral tradition of royal genealogy of the Mosi can be categorized into two groups. Those in the first group belong to a mythical age. They are components of messages which have a paradigmatic structure. This function is born by one word, instead of a phrase. On the other hand, other names belong to a "historical" age. Names in this category are made up of phrases, which depict circumstances of accession to the throne and other historical events. Those circumstances are a chain of irreversible and unpredictable events and phenomena. In principle, those in the former group are notes and descriptions of people's names, which are a single proper noun. In contrast, those in the latter are "war names" and "auspicious names", that are addressed in public for the presentation of commendations. The former is characterized by "history to be narrated", whereas the latter has a feature of "history to be summoned."
- (3) The nature of oral history in the Mosi society is deeply related to the situation of grammatical "person", that is created in the arena of oral tradition. There are three parties involved in the scene; 1) originator (story-teller) of history, 2) recipients (the king to whom the recitation is addressed with the usage of a second person, and the audience present in the scene, who are the most significant recipients), and 3) the subject of narratives, that is to say, ancestors of the present king.
- (4) Reflecting these features, "tense" and "aspect" in the Mosi oral history can be divided into two groups. The first group include diverse "tense" and "aspect", most of which can be found in notes and descriptions. They reflect the points of view of originator (story-teller). They prevail in sections for "history to be narrated." On the other hand, the other group include "tense" and "aspect", which are manifested in "war names = auspicious names" of the subject of recitation. (Many of them are "punctual" tense, which is pertinent to the purpose of representing the truth of general nature. Other verbs in narratives are defined in terms of their relations to the "punctual.") Having said so, however, we should not ignore the fact that, even in the latter category, are there diverse "tense" and "aspect" in description of the subject. In this case, the subject is designated by a one-word name. The difference between the two groups which I have delineated with regard to the usage of "tense" and "aspect" should be considered "orientation", rather than difference in what is actually told. As a matter of fact, although there is variation in depth and magnitude, both orientations can concurrently exist, intermingling with each other, in many parts of historical narratives.

Judging by these observations, it would be right to say that "tense" and "aspect" in "oral history" are essentially different from time in reality, which is the subject of depiction. In this sense, I trust that it is one of the major challenges for us to review the representation of "tense" and "aspect" in oral tradition, which has a function to record history in societies without writing, by comparing them with

those in narratives that are registered in writing. I believe that it would be an important undertaking for us to apply the same perspective and analytic method to both groups. On this point, *Tempus. Besprochene und erzählte Welt*, which was written by Harald Weinrich, is indeed of major importance for us. In this book, the author focused mainly on narratives in writing, while he covered the area of oral tradition to some extent as well. A proposition that was presented by Weinrich is that “‘tense’ has nothing to do with time.” What he proposed is in agreement with my analysis of oral history reported in this paper. Weinrich proposed a distinction between two “tenses”, that is to say, “besprechend Tempus” and “erzählend Tempus.” An interesting question is how his approach of classification can be related to my proposal of two types of “orientation”, which I have elaborated in this report. While extending the comparative studies of oral history further, I am interested in looking into this particular question from a wider perspective. It is certainly one of the major challenges for the future.

### Notes

- 1) The entire text of “story-telling” in drum language and verbal recitation in Material (B) is incorporated in Side B of Cassette Tape II of *Taiko ga tsuzuru rekishi* (= History Recited with Drums), which was compiled by Kawada 1988 [1982]. In addition, part of Material (A) is live recorded in Side A-18 of Cassette Tape I, under the title of “Adoration of King’s Ancestors.” Particularly impressive was the sound of a female cry to cite “*kilisgo*.” It was from a woman participating in the ceremony, and she quivered the tongue to articulate this cry of admiration. All words in (A) and (B) are transcribed in the Mosi language, using roman letters. Then the transcripts are translated into French. Attached to it are notes on meanings of words as well as ethnological and historical notes, all of which are in French. The official language in Burkina Faso, to which the Mosi belong, is French. I prepared the transcription and notes in French so that they could be read, reviewed and criticized by the king of *Tānkudgo* and intellectuals in the Mosi society. All of them are incorporated in Kawada(1985). Furthermore, this book (1985) also includes the transcriptions of recitation, in the Mosi language, of royal genealogy of *Lalgē* in the southern Mosi region, together with that of *Wagadgo* (Ouagadougou) in administration since the French colonization up today in Middle Mosi. I prepared translation and notes for both of them.
- 2) I elaborated, in Kawada 1990 [1976], on the issue of integration of royal genealogy in various Mosi states into one text. This subject is discussed in Chapter 5, “*Keihu no togo* (Integration of Lineage).”
- 3) With regard to this subject, there are two good reports, which elucidate this fundamental issue in a clear and concise manner. One of them is a discussion by Jiro Tanaka (Kawada 1987:178-196). Tanaka dealt with historical perception among Bushmen, a hunting people living in the south of Africa. The other is a paper written by Katsuyoshi Fukui (Kawada 1987: 219-249). This author reviewed the issue of in what way “*Bodi* people”, an ethnic group in Ethiopia who lived on cattle breeding, identified themselves as an ethnic group and its history.
- 4) Cf. Kawada 1979 [1971]: 312-317.
- 5) Cf. Kawada 1992 [1990] *Jojishi to Nendaiki* (= Epic Poems and Chronicles). Table 3 is

based on this book.

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