

論文の英文要旨

論文題目

Masks in Bassari society ethnographical research on masks and the discourse about them

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Yamada Shigechika

This dissertation examines masks and the discourse about them in Bassari society. The Bassari are cultivators who live in the Senegal-Guinea border area. They call themselves *alian* (pl. *bulian*). The Bassari number approximately 15,000-20,000 in Senegal and Guinea combined.

Masks play very important roles in the society. Precedent works tend to describe the Bassari masks as “supernatural sprits”. For instance, in 1971 Gessain describes that for women and children masks are supernatural spirits which have superhuman power. In 1977 Ferry wrote that women and children are told that masks are spirits which come from rivers or woods. Girard wrote in 1984 that Bassari masks are sprits of the underworld and that they are inextricably linked with Bassari cosmology. In 1986 Nolan uses the words “masked sprit” to describe Bassari masks. Recently, in 2003 Gessain describes masks as incarnated spirits which are covered with leaves and fibers of trees.

But these descriptions might be too static and one-sided. It is true that masks in Bassari society are sometimes said to be “spirits,” but they are not always described this way. The Bassari also talk about masks in different ways. Moreover, even if Bassari masks are “spirits”, they are not “spirits” in the same way as masks are said to be “spirits” in other societies in Africa. Therefore, the question to be posed must be what spirits are in Bassari society. And if, as many anthropological works show, masks in Africa are not unchangeable but are products constructed in specific historical processes, their representation can also be grasped not as something static which is linked with society’s cosmology but as something constructed in an historical process and in a specific mode of communication.

These simple issues are the starting points of this dissertation. This dissertation tries to put the discourse about masks in the historical context of Bassari society.

Chapter One, to set up a framework of discussion, summarizes the precedent works which try to describe a specific society not as a closed space but as a space open to the outside. Chapter Two shows ethnographical data to help readers understand the following discussion. Chapter Three examines Bassari history. This chapter first outlines the history of the South Southern Senegambia region, including the area now inhabited by the Bassari. It then tries to reconstruct the history of Bassari society and concludes that even though Bassari society is considered now to be isolated, it has not been always isolated as the Bassari communicated with a many people in Southern Senegambia where many people moved from and to throughout history. It was this communication

that made them create the present isolated society. Chapter Four examines changes in descent groups and the age-grade system in Bassari society. Today these two institutions appear to be changing. The age-grade system does not seem to be functioning properly. Many Bassari consider age-grade activities to be useless, and age-grade-based dances have decreased in number. Some terms specific to the age-grade system are now also used outside the system. Words traditionally used between people initiated in the same year may now be used between people who have no connection through age-grade initiation. After describing these institutions, I examine how they have changed, and the meaning of these changes. In doing so, I argue that personal relationships are changing in accordance with institutional changes in Bassari society. Chapter Five describes Bassari masks such as *olukuta*, *odinir*, *ogangoran*, *biitya*, and *axore* that French-speaking Bassari refer to as "type-contre" (contrary person). In Bassari language, *axore* is classified as a different thing with masks. After analyzing the roles and characteristics of masks and *axore*, there are at least four confirmed facts:

- 1) Masks sing and dance to entertain people in occasions such as festivals or communal agricultural labor.
- 2) Masks are given the roles of proclaiming, executing and maintaining rules.
- 3) Masks and *axore* are closely linked with the age-grade system.
- 4) Masks and *axore* have the function of multiplexing human relationships in changing names, attitude, languages, etc.

Chapter Six examines how the Bassari talk about the relationship between masks, *axore* and men who become masks or *axore* by wearing leaves and fibers of trees. In Bassari society, men have the right to become masks or *axore* after drinking a drink which contains chameleon meat scraps at the place called *ekub* on the second day of the initiation ceremony. The Bassari say that those who drink this drink are with *axore* or that they have got *axore*. And it is said that these expressions are applicable to masks as well. And to become a masks or *axore* is considered becoming another race (*nung*). This expression is also used to describe boys who change their names, attitude and languages in the process of initiation. From this fact it can be confirmed that masks, *axore*, and initiated boys are considered analogous. Chapter Seven describes narrative mode, focusing on the differences between masks and *axore*. Masks are categorized as one of the *biil* that French-speaking Bassari refer to as "génie" ("spirit" in English). But *axore* are not. And it is strictly forbidden to reveal who is wearing the mask in the presence of women or children, although it is not at all difficult to know. On the contrary, to refer to the link between *axore* and the man who has become *axore* is not at all forbidden. In Chapter Six and Chapter Seven, it is confirmed that there are two modes of narrative about masks and *axore* in Bassari society. One considers masks and *axore* to be analogous. The other regards masks and *axore* as two different existences. But presently only the latter is stressed. Researchers and

French-speaking Bassari say that masks are spirits, ignoring the existence of the mode of narrative which focuses on the similarities between masks and *axore*. Chapter Eight examines why only the latter narrative has become stressed by describing the change in the relationship between Bassari society and the outside. In doing so, I argue that the importance of communication in French is increasing in accordance with the change in the relationships between the Bassari and others. Additionally, the number of occasions in which the Bassari talk about their masks in French is increasing. Talked about in French, Bassari masks are stressed differently than when talked about in Bassari. In other words it may be possible to infer that masks as spirits are not something static inextricably linked with Bassari cosmology. Rather it may be an historical product which has become stressed in accordance with the increase in the importance of French communication in Bassari society.