

Translation of Oral History Interview with Sadio Diallo

QUESTION: We will start first by asking your last name, your first name, the name of your village and your trade?

DIALLO: These questions are addressed to me? I thank God, I thank you and I am very happy. My name is Sadou Mama Diallo. From here to Matam, if you hear Sadou Mama Diallo, it's me. I am the only one who responds to this name. I work as a farmer, breeder and fisher. I'm a traditional practitioner, that's my current trade. The people sitting over there are the clients from Mauritania. There you go, I am where I am now.

QUESTION: What is your age and the name of the place where we are?

DIALLO: I would like them to bring my papers, so that you can verify my age. I'd also like that everything you say about me is clear and sharp. Go, get me my black cellphone, the one I had from with me to the farm and bring it to me.

QUESTION: Are you okay with us filming this interview or not?

DIALLO: If I wasn't okay with being filmed, I'd have hidden myself like the other village people who don't wish to be filmed. I give my permission to be filmed. I am even going to add this: don't be afraid, I tell my story and the story of my parents so I don't do wrong to anybody.

QUESTION: Tell us the name of your village?

DIALLO: Our village is called Nganno. We are Ngannese.

QUESTION: Tell us about your genealogy?

DIALLO: This is what I want. They captured my father from a place that's called Tiguine. Do you know Tinguine in Mali? We are Diawbé Peuls, from the Yirlabé line. The Moors were taken from there, even though he was only 15 years old. Then he was sold to Abdoul Bokara. Abdoul Bokara Kane de Dabiya (a resistance against French domination). My father stayed in Dabid, he didn't cross the river. At the death of his master, he came here and he married our mother. So he settled here in Nganno. He's called Mama Yéro Gouro, Yéro Gouro is my father. Pay attention, his name is Mama Yéro Gouro; he was captured in Tiguine in Mali while he was only 15 years old. Abdoul Bokara bought him. And, in the end, he didn't cross the river. When his master was assassinated, he came back to live here. He never went back to live among his people in Mali. He met my mother; he had many children and he died here at the age of 130.

QUESTION: And on your mother's side?

DIALLO: She is buried very close to here. Her name is Koudi Binta. She has Diop as her family name. On the maternal side, the parents of my mother were also sold here. I showed you the place of the river, where they had to pass through to be sold. These two parents were bought by the chief of this village where we are. They were with other slaves who crossed the river to be

sold elsewhere. The chief of the village didn't authorize the slave traffickers to cross through this part of the river, except when exchanging slaves. This is the place I'm going to show you later. My mother is called Kouidi Diop and her mother is named Binta, you understand. Her father is called Inthie, that's how they named him. They are Bambara, they were all captured in Mali. Tell me if it's clear, if not I'll say it again.

QUESTION: And your genealogy from the maternal perspective?

DIALLO: On the side of my mother, her father isn't from here. Except for our own parents, we don't know the others, and their parents came here by the slave trade. When they died, there were only our parents here, as you can understand. And, even our parents, there was only one left here. Samba Diop died and Samba Inthie too. The famous Samba Diop singer from Lélé her father comes from here and Samba Diop himself is the little brother of my own mother. Samba Diop Lélé is from the same siblings as my mother, he was born just after my mother. (Unclear from 5mn03 to 6mn44). Those who made us suffer here, they are the Dia families. The masters who have slaves here are the Dia families and all other discourse is false. The Dia families are accomplices of Abdou Salem (chief of the Kanel canton) and who live in Kanel (city). Those who I just cited, everything they asked for was done immediately. The Dias are the owners of my maternal great-grandmother and my maternal grandfather. Those last two were their servers here. They lived in a situation of very difficult servitude here. They worked hard without being paid and without clothes. Did you understand? Your children don't belong to you, you carry them at the same time you carry the children of your master and you continue at the same time to farm the land. This went well here. My own mother carried her children on her back and farmed the earth at the same time during her whole life. Her father also did the same thing. His mother also did the same thing. I'm telling you this because I saw it. I'm telling my parents' story and for this, I'm not afraid of anyone. The owner of my mother, a few days after my birth said, talking about me: "this one I made him noble." He said: "That one isn't a slave." He was talking about me. However, I never forgot what my parents suffered. Did you understand? (...). But I know that me, I was never a slave.

QUESTION: Can you describe your mother's way of dressing at the time?

DIALLO: His clothes, yes I know. What I saw my mother wearing, she had a single little pagne around her. This pagne has a name, it's still called this, I forgot it again, no, it's not diaga, diaga is for boys. This is a pagne covered in all sorts of things and we knit.

QUESTION: Is this type of clothes reserved exclusively for women slaves?

DIALLO: Ah yes, for if it's the noble women wearing this, they make them bigger according to the waist of the person. So, for the women slaves this barely covers their privates. Listen closely to what I'm telling you. They don't have the right to change it when the cloth comes apart. If it's about a good master, before the cloth is even destroyed, he offers another to change into for his honor. If not, the clothes are not easy to produce all the more reason than those of the slaves. A noble never puts on rags. If you are my master, they can't dress the same way. Listen closely to this. The slave didn't eat when he wanted, either. And about the pagnes, they weren't a specific color. Often it's the person who would choose the dye that they liked for their clothing, but the

stitching was unique. You already imagine the color of a slave's clothing, it's nothing like the clothes of their master. A simple stitching for the slave that he or she puts on their body, so that they can't say such a slave is miserable. For the rest of it, even if a slave wears dyed clothing, the master gets the honor.

QUESTION: Did your parents tell you about some of their suffering?

DIALLO: Everything I'm telling you, they are the ones who told me about it. They are the ones who told me that, yes. There are some things that I saw, but they told me about events that happened before.

QUESTION: If someone is made noble, can they become a slave again?

DIALLO: Now they have no rights over me. I thank God for this, they have no rights over me. There was an old man in the family of my mother's masters, he passed away 3 years ago. For every family reunion he likes to tell other family members to be careful with me, because his relative made me noble when I was a baby. However, as I pointed out, I haven't forgotten what my parents went through in these families. I will continue to denounce this, because they know it's the truth.

QUESTION: If there's, for example, a feast ceremony among the nobles, can they ask you to come work for them?

DIALLO: I'm going to tell you how feasts are organized here in Nganno. If it's a noble who is organizing a feast, he stays seated and the slaves do all the work. And if it's a party organized by a slave family, the nobles come to ask their share of the money as griots. Have you understood this correctly? If a Fulani has a feast ceremony, the members of the servants' families come and receive their gifts. And, if we who organize a celebration ceremony, the members of a Fulani family come to play the role of griots. You understand? Try to understand this, because it's what's happening here in Nganno.

QUESTION: Did your parents experience any stigmatization related to their condition as slaves?

DIALLO: Of course. If someone calls you a slave, he's belittled you, keep the courage you have to protest. But if someone calls you a slave, they've belittled you.

QUESTION: Have they told you any specific cases of this?

DIALLO: No, except what I had told you.

QUESTION: How do you plan to share what you know about your parents so that these injustices don't happen again?

DIALLO: What they went through will never happen again. "I am stronger than you and I impose my will on you," that no longer exists in Senegal. I'm sure of what I'm saying. If today we were told to reproduce the world of the slave trade in our own way, we former slaves will

become masters of many new slaves (Laughs). There is also courage. If you mistreat your relative, at some point it becomes unbearable for you and you react. I don't know if you understand what I mean. If someone was harshly abusing your relative and their relative tells you about it, at some point you may want to avenge your relative. And one day, it might happen, because the bad memories are there. Do you understand? I don't know if your question was going in that direction.

QUESTION: Did you witness any other abuse in the village concerning slavery?

DIALLO: it does exist. But, on my part, no one dares to approach me in this way. They pay attention to me. Wanting to mistreat you because you were this or that. This doesn't exist in the village of Nganno.

QUESTION: Do you know the places in the park where they made the slaves cross?

DIALLO: The place is called Dioudé. This is what we call the place, but another place further from the river also exists. The place of the river that I'm going to show you, we can cross there at the ford and the water comes up to your shoulders, during the dry season. If the dry season is underway, the water comes up to your knees. There's another place farther away where you can cross the water and the water comes up below your knees when the water level drops. In certain periods even a car can cross over there. But the human traffickers preferred the Dioudé place, close to the village, because it's closer. The chief of the village obliges them to pay before making the slaves cross. You put yourself into agreement with him and you leave him two or three slaves. It's for this reason that my two maternal grandparents stayed with the chief of the village. They stayed in this village. The chief chose those who he wants to keep with him and the other are made to cross the river toward Mauritania. I don't know if you understand.

QUESTION: In what conditions were they captured?

DIALLO: Very good question. Haven't I told you about a place in Mali called Tiguine, there are the moors who left there to bring them here. The moors stole people there and brought them here. They systematically passed through our village Nganno, because the crossing is easier. They were armed with guns, but they paid the chief to cross. It's the chief of the village who demands this. Abdoul Bokara also did the same thing. The remaining the slaves cross the river and become the slaves of Moors. And, those who didn't cross stay here and integrate into our society. This happens in this way, did you understand?

QUESTION: These are the two places that you're going to show us later?

DIALLO: The first is closer to here, to cross the water comes up to your shoulders, but the traffickers prefer to pass through there. However, the second place is covered in forest and was less secure than here. Reason for which the chief of the village asked them to pay before going through the river, you understood. This last one also had his gun and people who worked for him. The Moor made the slaves cross and left some others with the chief of the village.

QUESTION: these places are very interesting. Apart from this, are there other things, for example a tree, that symbolize slavery?

DIALLO: There's a tree on the side of the village's chief's house that was reserved for the people who supervised this traffic. The tree is called Dindéwi, it's still there. This tree has become rare today in this region. At the time there were big trees like Dindéwi and Douballéwi. The chief of the Kanel canton, who is called Abdoul Salam Kane camped under this tree with his court, when he came through the village. He's the one who gave orders to the local chiefs. He's the one who supervised everything that happens in the region. If he asks for Sadou (our speaker) to be tied up, the chiefs would do it right away. When he moves from village to village, he's carried on a wooden bed. If he leaves his city Kanel, for example, the slaves take charge of carrying him here to Nganno. If he leaves Nganno to go to the village of Hordoldé it's again the slaves who carry him there. Sometimes, it's not even the slaves, but people he chooses. That's how Abdoul Salam gets treated in the region.

QUESTION: So, Abdoul Salam was complicit with the local chiefs?

DIALLO: He's the one who commands them. He says to them: "Stay here, do this, do that, etc..." No village chief would dare do something without telling him first. If a village chief tells you he's doing something without telling Abdoul Salam first, he's lying. He's buried in Kanel, of course.

QUESTION: In addition to carrying Abdoul Salam, when he's passing through, what are the other works these slaves do?

DIALLO: Everything you need as a master. If you want him to go fishing, the slave will go fishing. If you want him to watch sheep, he'll watch them. If you want him to farm, the slave will go to the field. If you want him to cut wood, he'll cut wood. If it's a woman, she'll take care of the kitchen, she'll pound the millet to feed the family. Another food is meant to feed the master. The slaves have food that is reserved for them, whether it's good or not, this is what the slave must eat. My parents lived that. The woman slave spends the day collecting and carrying water, in the cold, because during a certain period of the year it was quite cold. She is already poorly dressed and stays outside to collect water, who knows how many times per day. Her nose is stuffed due to a cold. She didn't dare say anything, and she also carried a child on her back. What I'm telling you here, it happened here in the village and in other villages with other women.

QUESTION: You, for example, did your mother have you on her back while she was working out in the sun?

DIALLO: Everything she did, she had me strapped to her back. My mother is the eldest of Samba Diop Lélé, they have the same father. The mother of Samba Diop Lélé is the slave of Abdoul Salam of Kanel, you understood. He even has a son who wants to do research like you're doing, you understand. I forgot his name, he even called me for that. He told me that he wanted to know his grandparents, but without our genealogy. I refused to tell him. I told him that in the whole village of Nganno, I am the only keeper of the genealogy of our family. I dissuaded him

from coming to my house for this. I told him “If you want to know our genealogy of all of us, I’ll teach it to you.” Unfortunately, he was only interested in their line, but not ours, so I refused. I don’t like separatism.

QUESTION: Apart from the hard work that they did, were the slaves ever mistreated, for example were they ever tied up as a means of punishment?

DIALLO: I didn’t get it at all. Tying up a slave did exist in the village and even elsewhere, but I didn’t hear about it in our family. There are several ways to tie up a slave. As for Abdul Salam, he didn’t tie up people in my family, but there are many slaves that were tied up, I saw it. If the slave makes a mistake, we tie him up to correct him, anyone who has not told you that, has not told you the truth. I am your slave and I did something you didn’t like, you tie me up and punish me. I assure the slave gets tied up. We put wood around his hands and we tie him up (Laughter). We leave him like that all night with the mosquitoes. I swear, until the early hours of the morning. He is like a horse left at the mercy of mosquitoes with blood everywhere. We’ve seen it all here. If he’s a 20-year-old young man, he’s dressed in short shorts barely a meter wide to cover him. This young man walks barefoot. Everyone knows he’s a slave. You are noble and I’m a slave, can we dress the same? Yes, I walk with you, people know I’m a slave. One has shoes and the other doesn’t. That’s what existed here.

QUESTION: You had talked earlier about your mother’s clothing, can you describe them to us?

DIALLO: The women’s clothing largely depends on the wealth of their masters. As for my mother, she had a robe of 2 meters. This didn’t work for her, for my mother has a large size. If you know Samba Diop Lélé, the brother of my mother, they have the same size. They both have a large size. Could 2 meter fabric cover her?

QUESTION: What was the nature of her hair?

DIALLO: A beautiful braid and a carelessly done braid are not the same. They are recognizable by their bad braids, while noble women put on beautiful braids. And, the slave never stands in front of the nobleman when they walk together on the street. He does not dare. That existed here, he doesn’t dare.

QUESTION: Can an ennobled slave become a slave again?

DIALLO: Personally, I will always stay in the social group of slaves. For, I can’t deny the social origin of my parents. I am not ashamed to say we are minorities in the village. Until now slavery has existed. I have a lot of consideration for my parents. Look at neighboring countries. You do have people with their guns and who take men with them. That’s what slavery is. Slavery will always exist, until the end of the world. If I am stronger than you, I dominate you. Even we ourselves are slaves. The white people are stronger. Us, for example, France is the one who governs us. You see, this happens this way.

QUESTION: What do you know about French colonization?

DIALLO: I know a few things about French colonization. Samba Diop Lélé, the brother of my mother, had a little brother who had been forced to enlist in the French army. He enlisted as a soldier, but out of force. It was still at the time of Abdoul Salam. If you are a volunteer or not, you are obliged to enlist. When they came to the village chief's house, it's the one I was telling you about earlier, who said I was born free from slavery. He is dead, he is the same age as my uncle. His father who was village chief, replaced him with my uncle, who was his slave. This is how my uncle went to the world war. I don't speak French, but the terrible war that happened there. He came back safe and sound. He came back rich and they were sorry. This happened here. He refused to enlist his son, who's a noble. Instead, he sent his slave, who became who rose in the arm's hierarchy and became a colonel or a sergeant, isn't that money. They were sorry. They thought at the beginning that my uncle wouldn't come back alive. It's the village chief who had decided that. Now, my uncle is dead, but his children win and still touch money. His children get monthly allocations, while the children of the king live poor. Them, our masters, are there and have nothing, nothing at all.

QUESTION: Do you know the place where your parents are buried?

DIALLO: Yes, I know it.

QUESTION: Which one?

DIALLO: I know my mother's tomb is unrecognizable, for it's been so long since she died. They are both buried in the village cemetery. I would have difficulty finding the tomb of my father, I can just point out its placement. If I were there when they died, I could have put paintings as indications. But I never did that. The main reason for this is that I didn't have it at the time. I had left in exile. I was in Mauritania, I was in Mauritania, you understand. And later, I settled in Dakar. I worked in a peanut making factory that belonged to a Frenchman. Do your inquiry, you'll see that this factory belongs to a Frenchman, that's where I worked. I worked there for a long time and one day, they began to debit our takes in advance. I refused this early debit and I left the factory. The vice president of the factory was a Torodo who is called...oh I forgot his name. We called him captain, here is Captain Ly, he's the one who hired me, you understood? He was married to a white woman and he liked being close to the Benna-Tali factory. He's someone who really appreciated me and hired me in his factory.

QUESTION: Do you want to come back to the story of your uncle who was part of the Second World War?

DIALLO: Yes, I had told you earlier that he didn't enlist voluntarily, but he was forced to go to war. The chief of the village hid his own children and he replaced them with slaves like my uncle. The chief had his son who was the same age as my uncle, he chose my uncle to go in place of his son. My uncle went to war and came back with honors and wealth. However, the children of the chief stayed poor. That's what happened here.

QUESTION: What's your uncle's name?

DIALLO: He's called Samba Inthi. The other (the singer) is named Samba Diop Lélé and this one is called Samba Inthi. Inthi is the name of his father. Each of them is the second son of his mother, from where the first name Samba, do you understand? Abdoul Salam is the master of Samba Diop Lélé's mother. While the mother of Samba Inthi is a slave of the other still, what's his name? It's Mamadou, no, it's Abdoul. He is from the Dia family, his name is Mamadou Hamidou. Each one is the second son of his mother: Samba Diop Lélé et Samba Inthi. We were talking about the latter. He is also dead now. After the war he became rich and his children inherited that. And the chief was sorry. If he had known earlier, it would have sent his own children to war instead of his slave. And the other was under his possession, he made him go to war, so that he didn't come back. He did hide his children. He really thought that the slave would never get out of the war.

QUESTION: Could we say that one of your uncles became free thanks to the army and the other thanks to music?

DIALLO: The second had followed his mother. When his father died, his mother was with his master with him, you understand. Samba Diop Lélé stayed there and when he became a young adult, he came back here and started to sing. But when he became a singer, it's the people from the village of Kanel who were the first to recognize his talent. Later his daughters got married here in the village. All children thought that their original village was Kanel (where he had a lot of success). It's me myself who told them that Kanel isn't their village of origin. So they asked their father who confirmed it to them. I told them that the village of our father is Nganno. And then two of his daughters got married here (Laughs). The son of one of his daughters called me to tell me that he wanted to do research like you, on the origin of their parents. However, what interested him was on his father's side. I refused to answer him. If this interests you, you have to ask about the whole genealogy, not just one part of it. We are all relatives and you want to separate our kith and kin by only speaking about one part of it, I don't talk to you. The problem too is that I'm the only keeper of this genealogy, no one else in the village knows our genealogy. There are more than 20 people in our community in this village. When I was young, I got close to my family and I accepted to learn this and if I was educated, I could have gotten a lot of things out of it. But the good Lord decided this way. And more particularly, I got closer to my father. My father taught me many things. My mother only taught me a few things. But I learned a lot from my father, thank God. My father had 40 children. I said it is currently 40 children, yes. Some of them are at Sinthiou garve and others at Dianjoli, you understand. Others are here in Nganno. Others are in Barmathié. Others still are in Horndoldé. All are his children.

QUESTION: Do you have relationships amongst yourselves?

DIALLO: No, not really. If they wanted, for example, they could get a lot of things from me. The other day, one of my nephews was talking with my son and he said that he grew up on the other side of the river (the Mauritanian side), my son said to him "If you want to know the origins of your grandparents, you can ask my father." But they are prideful. About my father, they were captured in Tiguine in Mali and they were sold in Dabiva, as I had told you, and Tiguine resembles Dioulol. Do you know Dioulol? It's a valley and Tiguine is also a valley. We are the Yirlbé Fulani from Diawbé.

QUESTION: Have you already been to visit there?

DIALLO: No, I've never gone there. There's even someone else from my family who inquired about that. He left me an audio message so that I could give him information about our origins in Mali. I told him: "Start first by coming to see me and then we'll see together what we can do." For, it's my father who gave me information and even if I go there today, I could find them, but unfortunately, I didn't go. As for the two twins, it's their father who was in World War Two. I'm going to show you one of the twins here, she has a little business not far from here. They renounced their father by making believe that their father was Samba Diop Lélé. We're the ones who corrected this by teaching them that this was false. Samba Diop's real children were angry with the two twins because both of them became famous thanks to their music, and they let people believe that they were the legitimate daughters of Samba Diop Lélé (himself a famous singer from Fouta). The twins' father is my uncle, Samba Inthi, that one who was in the war and this is not my uncle Samba Diop Lélé, the singer. Samba Inthi and Samba Diop Lélé are half-brothers, my mother is their older sister. It's from then on that they began to correct this mistake, but everywhere in Fouta, there are rumors about the paternity of the twin singers and Samba Diop Lélé. I said that this is false. The children of Samba Diop Lélé aren't musicians. However, my father was a musician.

QUESTION: What genre of music does he play?

DIALLO: I know it well. When his famous master Abdoul Bokara left for war against the Moors and the French, he said: "If I don't come back alive, I liberate all of my slaves." Abdoul Bokara died on the front and my father was freed, he left and became a dancer and a tambourine player. I'm a molo (viol) player.

QUESTION: Do you still play this instrument?

DIALLO: No, I don't play anymore (laughs). Until now I can make it, but I don't use it anymore.

QUESTION: How many years ago did you give it up?

DIALLO: It's been about a decade. Because, when I gave it up, my son, who you see there, still remembers it. I didn't want to stay in music. I have a special string in my viol. If I play it, the Djinnns come to tell me what I have to do.

QUESTION: Is it from Kéroné (music of hunters)?

DIALLO: No, it's not from Kéroné. The molo instrument that I use is different from the lute of Kéroné music. The Kéroné lute evokes the hunt, it's for hunters. These hunters playing the kéroné make mystical projections before the hunt. However, I play the poy.

QUESTION: How is the poy played?

DIALLO: The poy is played at the intention of courageous people who aren't afraid of anything. When we play the poy in front of you, you go out voluntarily and you say "This poy is mine

and so you pronounce as your last word the name of God. I swear to you that the sun doesn't set that say without you being confronted by a problem. I'm the one telling you this. When you play poy and molo, you must never say it belongs to you, because it's dangerous. Don't take poy and name God's name at the end (Laughs).

QUESTION: ???

DIALLO: I know how to play the poy and it's my father who taught me how to play. My father was known in the subregion of Youmanyiré in Mauritania, to Hordolndé, Dao, Magama, etc... He is known by the name of Mama Thianpagni, but his real name is Mama Yéro Gouro. The nickname of Thianpani is linked to his trade as a weaver. My father raised livestock, he did fishing and he farmed at the same time.

QUESTION: How did he teach you that?

DIALLO: I know it well. He taught me, because I was very close to him. Among his 40 children, I was the closest to him, yes. He transmitted his knowledge and his skill to me. I helped him when he cared for the ill who suffered from toothaches, fractures, epilepsy, and stomachaches, etc. Other men who suffered from sexual impotence, we cared for everyone. This is why he taught me many things. Thank God, I don't leave the village of Nganno to care for the ill, everyone comes to my place for treatment. I say this so that you can spread the word about it, I care here in the village of Nganno. If someone is sexually impotent, I can make it better in two days, you see. I also treat hemorrhoids. If someone suffers from the clap, I give him a plant and it heals. I care for epilepsy as well. There are doctors who give medicine for epilepsy, but we don't recommend this. The medication doesn't heal, but makes a sick person dependent. When each dose is finished, he falls. No, me, I make you drink a plant and the illness never comes again.

QUESTION: What type of plant do you give to an epileptic?

DIALLO: Me, I only heal with plants. I don't give anything other than plants, yes.

QUESTION: What type of plant is able to heal epilepsy?

DIALLO: No, I won't say (laughs).

QUESTION: So try to describe what types of plants, for example the family of boutignengnéwi?

DIALLO: No, the boutignengnéwi is never consumed. If someone told you that he lied. Me, my medications come from poultry. For epilepsy, our medications come from poultry that spend time in some of the trees. But I won't say the names of these pigeons. If I obtain this medication, whatever may be the preliminary duration of the sickness, ten years or a few days, I give in to him in the form of smoke, he stays a week without falling sick. And, so I started the treatment. So I started to cure him.

QUESTION: Specify, please, the nature of this care, because this is also knowledge?

DIALLO: I tell you that the care for epilepsy comes from poultry. And I know it well. This comes from Wouga (a type of pigeon), from Ngéwé (a pigeon with a black mark on its neck), and the other pigeon was there earlier, le Mariama (a turtledove). In the case of epilepsy, I work with these three pigeons. Whatever the provisional duration is of the duration, I heal it in a few days. This comes from poultry (laughter). There are places of the tree that the pigeons touch, those are the ones we take and give to the ill and he heals. However, it doesn't involve all pigeons, only those three. I told you it's about Wouga, Ngéwé and Mariama, that's what I told you.

QUESTION: After getting the education from your father, at what moment did you decide to use traditional pharmacopeia and to use it as a trade, what pushed you to do it?

DIALLO: I gave my proof to this village, if you ask a traditional practitioner, they'll bring you to my place. And yet, there are people older than me here, but if you speak of this trade, they'll direct you to me. My father taught me the knowledge and he told me you can't use it before you're 30 years old. If you refuse and you start to want to use it and you are only 15, it's not recommended for you. But if you wait to be 30 or older, you will be able to do what you want and nothing bad will happen to you. Neither a crocodile nor a lion nor a genie will be able to do anything against you, because you're the age of an adult. However, if you're a teenager and you start saying "Papa teach me this, I'm going to use it" this is the cause of catastrophes that happen to young people, it's not good. He did warn me about genies and everything.

QUESTION: This knowledge that you just referenced, it was transferred to you from your father, how had he learned it in the conditions of slavery?

DIALLO: He learned it when he left slavery. Could he learn it when he was captured, when he was only 15 years old? He was sold and he lived in slavery, he couldn't learn anything. It's a gift from God, I don't know how he learned it. I know that from the side of his parents, they had knowledge. When he separated from his masters, he joined the masters in these domains. You see, for example, in the work of weaving, I am capable of saying incantations and of being able to break the thread of someone who's doing it.

QUESTION: Who taught you that?

DIALLO: It's him, my father. He lived with weavers. If you ask the real weavers of Sinthiou Garba (village), they will tell you that so and so, so and so, and so and so were their students. It's there as well that he learned weaving. They gave him a wife (weaver), you listen to me, because he was handsome and disciplined. They gave him a wife; she was his first wife. His children lived in Dianjoli (village). Each person you ask about the descendants of Mama in these places will show you 40 families descended from my father. These descendants are the servants of Maboubés (weavers). It's there that he learned this trade of weaving. He learned to fish near the river, because he had lots of livestock. You know, the fact of having a lot of livestock, is bound to help you have a lot of friends.

QUESTION: Can you describe for us what type of weaving material you use?

DIALLO: Yes, I can. The production of the weaving material begins with the Niéré, this is the wood that twirls and moves back and forth, you understand. There is the Domré which is hooked on the Niéré. Then under that there is the Soyrou, which makes the noise: “whack, whack, whack.” There’s the Bélolol on which the fabric is hung, plus a stone that you throw as far as possible, according to your volition. When a competitor wants to prevent you from working, and if he reads an incantation, it’s bélolol that breaks, and this slows down your work. So you begin to reattach them and if he’s still reading an incantation, the bélolol breaks again, and you don’t advance. This incantation is the same as the one of a fish that’s called rimbéré.

QUESTION: Do you want to explain all that to us?

DIALLO: No, I don’t dare say this incantation (laughs). Every person who possesses the incantation of the rimbéré can also use the other incantation about weaving. If you put the rimbéré fish on the fire, look how its teeth transform. It’s the same nature that this incantation makes. You can go ask the fishermen. The fishermen are at the origin of weaving. It’s me who tells you this. Weaving comes from the river and the fishermen transmit it to the maboubés (weavers). And, these weavers transmitted it to the slaves, you understand. My father also taught me whatever his mystical knowledge was, to be wary of doing wrong to a member of the Maboubé community, because he’ll get revenge without hesitating. I’m telling you this.

QUESTION: Can you describe the rest of the weaving materials to us?

DIALLO: There’s also another thing that we call, that we call alouwal. It’s a tool that we pass from one hand to the other and we continue the movement from one hand to the other and this is the alouwal if I still remember.

QUESTION: Have we understood correctly that you practiced many trades and among others: in the field of traditional pharmacopeia, in the field of weaving, and you play the musical instrument the molo?

DIALLO: Yes, all the people of the village of Nganno can attest to it. I can also, when I have a neighbor with a field and at the time of harvest, I can do a thing that all of the harvest comes in my field. And you can’t do anything against that. If I wish, during the night, that your harvest can come join my harvest, as from an evening to the next day, it won’t return to your field.

QUESTION: Is it right to do such a wrong thing to neighbors?

DIALLO: No, it isn’t (laughs).

QUESTION: Have you already used these mystical techniques with your neighbors?

DIALLO: Yes, I did it. I did it with two field neighbors. Both of them could be my father. But, they don’t know me. I was foreign in this place and they assigned a field for me to farm. I seeded my field and everything grew well. At the time, I was with the mother of my son who you see. At the time I didn’t have another wife, I was with his mother and two little children. It was a time when people had no consideration for us, due to poverty. Well, we seeded the field, everything

grew well, it was nice to look at, they mystically wanted for the harvest to come to them. So I got revenge right away. It's then that they understood who they were dealing with, they left me alone. They had the habit of acting that way with their neighbors. In reality, they are very strong in the subject of mystic knowledge. But when they played with me, they understood. Because I got revenge. That's how it happened (laughs).

QUESTION: Do you want to tell us how the musical instrument a Molo is made?

DIALLO: Yes, I know. If you come back here, you will find that I made a molo for you, so that you'll be able to see it. I've been making a molo for myself since forever, you understand. If you don't want to be mystically attacked, you use the skin of a warthog, it's rare that you'll be bewitched by an adversary. It's the warthog that we also call a baba-laddé. If you can't find the skin of a warthog, you do what everyone else does and use the skin of a cow. You apply the skin on a gourd and you nail it in. We use wooden nails. So there are all sorts of gourds: some are long, others are fat, this depends on what it is you want. You cover the skin on the gourd, as you like. Then you take a wood (a handle) and you cut the skin as you wish. The sleeve sticks to the gourd like a hoddu (lute). You put for the string, the hair from a horse's tail, this is how we started. And when the nylon arrives, we have abandoned the horse's hair for the nylon.

QUESTION: Why did you prefer nylon?

DIALLO: It was in fashion. In our house here, there were more than twenty youths who spent the evenings with me. I was their boss. I started to play, we made tea and everything. At the time I also made bread (laughs). I make bread and I raise livestock.

QUESTION: How did you become a baker?

DIALLO: It's a Fulani friend who taught me that, here in our house. He is foreign to the village. He wanted to stay here, but he didn't have anywhere to sleep. I admitted him to my house and I became his guarantor in the village. You saw this building, it's an oven. I helped him prepare bread and he sold it and then I learned everything.

QUESTION: Have all these trades served you?

DIALLO: Yest, I've been well served by this ensemble of trades. But I don't practice them anymore. Look, this part of my house was full of sheep and goats. Him, my son, he's the last of the family, but he found them here. Everyone knows this. Now I've gotten old, I abandoned everything and I only take care of the traces of traditional practice.

QUESTION: Can you tell us what other types of plants you use?

DIALLO: Yes I know it. If you hear about traditional healing, it's about plants, for example the bilharzia and the plants against sexual impotence.

QUESTION: Do you want to cite the names of the plants you use?

DIALLO: No, I won't cite them (laughs)

QUESTION: We wanted now to go back to a question from earlier. You'll excuse me, you were made noble from your birth, did you ever try to marry a young noblewoman and did this pose problems?

DIALLO: No, I didn't accept that. The one who made me noble had a sister who was my best friend and the gentleman said to me: "You should get married to a woman from the family." This woman is still alive, I swear to you. I told him that I didn't agree with that. He told me that I didn't want to deny my parents' origins. I had this discussion with this man, today he's deceased. The father of the woman died very recently, even Mamoudou, my son knows him, he died maybe 4 years ago. He's the father of the young woman. Until his death, he often repeated the following phrase in village meetings: "This one (speaking of me) was made noble by my father from his birth."

QUESTION: You were made noble from birth, what about your children? How are they categorized?

DIALLO: They know it now; they're known for this. They didn't recognize their slave status, they are much closer to my ennobled status than anything else. I know that they are no one's slaves and they will never be. We already condemn all the injustices that our parents suffered, we won't be able to admit that our children suffer from the same things. If they want to maintain their system, they say: "Wasn't he, his mother or his father a slave?" You have to accept the status of your parents, it doesn't diminish anything in you.

QUESTION: What meaning do you give to these terms: liberty, equality, and the right of Man? Given your experience of the village's social structure, what can you say to us about your understanding of these terms?

DIALLO: That's a very good question. I am going to attempt to answer and you'll see if I understood the question. I know that a person isn't defined by his birth or by his familial belonging (Torodo, etc...), man is defined by his word and his character. A person can be defined by his word, personally, I hold a lot to my word, I will never change it to make another thing. This is being noble. If they qualify you as a liar, the nobility is something preferable. If you like to say: me I, me I, and you are a liar, that has no value. I know this definition of liberty (nobility) but I don't know if this is what you want to know?

QUESTION: Does slavery always have to do with having black skin?

DIALLO: What defines slavery, is its relationship with strength; I am stronger than you, I reduce you to slavery. I won't say this is the only factor, but the relationship of strength is there a lot. This doesn't depend on being a fisher, neither being white, neither being Arab, neither being a Spaniard, but rather I am stronger than you and reduce you to slavery. I fight you, I'm the stronger, I take your life and you become my slave, that's what I think. But, in reality, no one is about another. It's the good Lord who created us, gave us all the liberty to live free. However, for

the law of men, I am stronger than you, I take you as a slave. This is what I think is at the origin of slavery.

QUESTION: Are there relations or public associations of the State or others that currently come to ask you about the question of slavery?

DIALLO: No, this doesn't exist in Nganno. You go search everywhere in the village of Nganno and you won't find one, similar to me and who speaks to you about this question of slavery. They're wrong and they are obstinate because they say that speaking to me about slavery doesn't do anything, but they don't know that your intervention could one day participate in the fight against slavery. You haven't insult them, you haven't forced anyone, you just asked the people who suffered the injustice of slavery to come testify to it, but even this, they don't dare come. They are there, they know everything, but they don't want to testify, it's their problem. I swear to you, none of the members of my family, if they had accepted to testify about slavery, the house would be full of people. But they don't want to testify, that's their problem and not mine.

QUESTION: Does their refusal to testify have to do with the fact that you were made noble and they weren't yet? You possess a liberty of expression that they don't have?

DIALLO: No, it's out of pride, they know everything. It's their story. Me, I'm not rich. Among them, there are some that have means and others who don't. But that's not why they don't want to testify, they just complicate life for no reason. And this is also out of ignorance. There is a great injustice committed to the slaves here in Nganno, and those ones won't be able to speak about it to anyone. This is found here. But, personally, I don't care. They know why you're here, but coming and testifying doesn't interest them and that's their problem.

QUESTION: At the end of the interview, you're going to show us the places you were talking about earlier?

DIALLO: I'm ready, it depends on you.

QUESTION: While waiting for new questions, you underlined something important about the research in our villages. When the researchers come, no one wants to testify on the subjects and at the release of books, they're not happy. They say: "they forgot this, they forgot that."

DIALLO: If you see that I accepted to testify it's for the future generations that haven't lived this, and look, only my son is present, all the others are absent. Do you know how many children I had? Only my wife that you see there, I had over 10 children with her. Her name is Faty Ba and she farts all the time (Laughs), because she is from the Ba family (and his last name is Diallo, they're cousins jokingly). Her cowife didn't agree to study everything that I taught them, but she did, yes. If one day, you come looking for me for whatever subject and I'm absent, you're obliged to leave. But if you find my wife Faty Ba, she'll be able to answer all your questions and also you can come back when you want.

QUESTION: Those who don't want to testify are they from the social group of slaves?

DIALLO: Yes, actually they are part of this group. But if they don't want to testify, it's their problem. You see, what my parents told me was truthful. Later, I am going to show you the path that leave from the village chief's house and goes to the place of the river where they made the slaves cross. No one can tell me otherwise. The building that you see over there, that's where the son of the chief currently lives, became the chief of the village, but before they lived in another house, next to the river. In the place where my house is, I am the first to live on that side of the village. With my wife that you see, one time we were sleeping alone in this house, lions came to enter by these doors. At the time, it was just us two, my wife that you see and myself. The lions came during the night, while we were sleeping, they went to enter the classes of the school. Since that day until today, no lion has approached the village. At the time, we had two children together. Toward this place in the village of Nganno, I am the first to live there. I am the first to live there. The village grew more toward the river and the route limited the expanse of the village. Friends from that side, my house is the first that was built here. However, I am not rich, I don't have a terrasse, but my house is the first that was built in this place. There you go, that's how it is. (Interruption due to the braying of a donkey from 12mn10 to 11mn38).

QUESTION: As we had said earlier, we thank you for having a coherent and consistent speech at the occasion of each meeting. Now, do you have other things that you had forgotten to tell us or even new things to add for the future generations?

DIALLO: I think we've said everything. I had told you that if the members of our community, the one of slaves, hadn't been taken by pride and if tomorrow, I'm not here, they can speaker of the injustice of slavery that they suffered, how our parents were mistreated and so and so had already said that. We discussed this earlier about this and even the last time as well, you understood. I explained to you that there are interesting places that I would like to show you later. You were asking if there was a tree under which the slave traffickers took shelter before crossing the river, and what is the name of this tree? I told you that they didn't take shelter under the tree, but they passed by the side of it. You had also asked what they were doing there? I answered that there were official meetings that happened there, and that were presided over by Abdoul Salam (chief of the canton). What's left for us to do, it's to go together to this tree that stands in front of the former house of the village chief and was a slave passage. There is another passage, but that is a little bit further. And there's all of it. About the rest, if you still have questions, I'm ready to answer you.

QUESTION: What else can you tell us about the trades you did?

DIALLO: I heal and I raise livestock. I farm, I play the instrument the molo and I weave. However, weaving, I only did it temporarily. It's my father who taught me all the techniques of weaving, he taught me, at the same time, the incantations to protect myself from adversaries, and after that, I stopped. I can make my workshop of weaving, but there are some materials, it's the labbo (person who makes bushels) who makes them. You order soyrou at his place, as well as niéré and doméré. Doméré is what is at the base of the other materials. Where, passing the thread, we use the kéwé wood after the filing. We pierce here and there; we make the threads go through and we fasten them. Each piece of kéwé wood is pierced to make a thread enter and so on. Each time that you turn over the thread, there is like a kind of tooth that forms on the wood and you continue to turn over the thread throughout the process. But I stopped this trade.

QUESTION: What type of fabrics do you make?

DIALLO: That depends. Everything starts with the person who does the spinning. The old people take care of the cleaning of cotton and of spinning. Then, it's the client who tells us, "I need," for example "three fabrics," you see? If you spread out the thread to make three fabrics, this can go, for example, all the way to over there. The clients can also order ten fabrics or six fabrics, this depends and the work isn't the same. It's after the order only that you can know the expanse of your work, after the finishing touches, you tell him: "Here are your three fabrics," for example. I don't know if this is what you want to know?

QUESTION: The three fabrics, for example, take how many days of work?

DIALLO: This largely depends on the status of the person that we call Gadio (master weaver). Not all workers have the same capabilities. You can have the physical capabilities to finish three fabrics per day and someone else is one fabric a day. I saw someone who did three fabrics per day and another who did two fabrics per day. This depends on the capabilities of the weaver.

QUESTION: What were your relationships with the Maboubés (keepers of this trade of weaving) when you met them?

DIALLO: I know. If it's the delivery of fabrics, there was a moment when we were making materials that we were putting here and there. Only the manner of walking could define the status of the person and the talent of the maker. Then you come back to your house, you change yourself and you wear a sirwal of ten diras (meters) or of five dira (meters), according to the people, all this existed, yes. There is a tool called soyrou hung up above the workshop, it makes noises and its noise can be heard from here to that car over there. Do you know what this noise means? It's the shoemaker who makes the soyrou, you understand, it is hung on the wood, of you attach it to the wood of a soyrou tree on a bucket and this makes a noise like "kak, kak" and that reflects the rapidity of the work done (laughs). You can ask this to any weaver.

QUESTION: And when the Maboubés find you in the middle of weaving, don't they say that this trade isn't yours, do you not have the right to exercise it?

DIALLO: They say it, try to say this clearly, they say it. "You, you are a slave, you shouldn't exercise this trade, if not we make you do this or that." They are numerous to tell me this. I know a slave who defeated a mabo (weaver) for this reason, but this shouldn't happen, he exaggerated a bit. Didn't I tell you that a slave whatever his talent for weaving must pay attention to a mabo (weaver). Even a mabo who doesn't master weaving, you have to respect him, for this is his domain. The Diaobés are stronger than the fishermen in the material knowledge of the river, but they respect the fishermen, for fishing is their specialty. However, about raising livestock, you have to respect the Diaobé, because this is his domain. Each of them is the keeper of knowledge of his domain.

QUESTION: So, you still arrange with them for this trade?

DIALLO: Yes, thank God, unless it's he who provokes me. On my side, I've always respected them.

QUESTION: Are your mystical knowledge and the domain of healing and your knowledge in the domain of weaving compatible?

DIALLO: Yes, there's a permeation of incantations in the two domains. Two different incantations at the beginning and finish in the same material. The beginning can be the same and after they separate.

QUESTION: Give us an example?

DIALLO: I know. For example, an incantation for a jam in the throat of someone who's eating, this can be said in different ways, depending on who's a fisherman or not. The fishermen claim that they are at the origin of this incantation but others also use it. Learning this doesn't depend on the family of fishermen or not. So, if the fisherman doesn't pay attention, you can be stronger than him. As for incantations, they can resemble each other or be different. Others have the same beginning or the same end. This can be in different ways, same beginning or same end, and sometimes they are similar on some lines but different on others. While others have no resemblance at all. I don't know if this is what you wanted to ask.

QUESTION: Your father did he learn all his knowledge in Mali before becoming a slave?

DIALLO: He didn't learn anything neither from his mother nor from his father. He left there when he was only 15 years old. He didn't know anything yet. He stayed under Abdoul Bokara as a slave, only he knows how many years. Have you heard talk about Mey Baydi Ali? Baydi Ali took two of his children, one of them is called Abdoul Mey and the other, if I'm not wrong, is called Mamoudou. He told them, talking about me, "Take that one with you, to Matam." He says: "That one, your grandfather was the last of his grandfather." It's Mey Baydi Ali who was in the government. We rarely go to visit them, but they are the family of our masters. Or well you didn't understand. As for the incantations, they are similar often or not. That's what makes it necessary to learn everything so you can defend yourself.

QUESTION: You explained to us the trades of your father, as well as the knowledge that he possessed and that he was rich and known.

DIALLO: I know many things about my father. However, the people who rubbed shoulders with him say that he knows everything, they know how to do everything (laughs). But, this is not possible.

QUESTION: The name of your father is Mama Yéro Gourou, was he a hunter?

DIALLO: What he hates most in life it's guns. He hates the axe and the knife. He doesn't like it one bit. He had often had a stick with him, but the rest didn't interest him.

QUESTION: What that?

DIALLO: His heart won't allow it. He lived near the lions; you understand. The lion never touches his animals. If he spits on a corpse nothing will touch this corpse. This knowledge, he didn't transfer it to me. Only the earth is capable of transforming this corpse.

QUESTION: Do you know his tomb?

DIALLO: I can just show the area, but not the tomb itself.

QUESTION: Is it here in the village and are we able to visit it?

DIALLO: It's in the village, we can go there. But I don't know where my mother's tomb is. If I saw Jofel Mayel, he could show us my mother's tomb, because I don't remember anymore. Ah yes, I remember now. I just remembered the space. She is buried across from the funeral house.

QUESTION: We'll take the car later to go see the places by the river where the slaves passed. And also, you will show us the tombs of your parents, that the good Lord has their souls. Back then were the funeral homes of the nobles the same as those of the slaves?

DIALLO: My mother was washed, in theory, like everyone. But my father, I don't know, because I wasn't there. At the death of my father, I was in Dakar in the Bel-Air neighborhood. It was after his death that I was given leave of 15 days, no rather 5 days. He died at the same time as my eldest daughter. But I came after, you understand. Myself, I know how to ritually wash the dead. However, my mother was washed by women and I know that she was washed like everyone.

QUESTION: Do you think the funeral washing of your grandparents was a ritual reserved only for slaves?

DIALLO: No, I swear to you I don't know.

QUESTION: I thank you so much for this interview, we're going to stop here.

DIALLO: It's me who thanks you. I pray to God that you can carry out your works with success. Yes, if people accept to testify or if they don't accept, this will have no repercussions on your works. You can take this off (microphone)?

QUESTION: Don't move, she's going to take care of it. **END.**