Much has been accomplished in the field of historical linguistics to demonstrate relatedness between African languages. The systematic methods of morphology, phonology and typology have been the tools par excellence in bringing to light similarities in African languages. The principle and most well established tool of the trade is the comparative method. There is however a limit to the comparative method in which all comparatists seek to avoid: language contact. If two or more cultures are in regular contact with each other due to trade, conquest or other reasons, vocabulary (and other innovations) is bound to be shared between languages. In order for the comparative method to be effective, one must eliminate all possibilities of borrowings and this makes it difficult when we try to reconstruct a proto-language from unrelated cultures who share a large amount of lexical items.

A second limitation to the comparative method is that it is very good at telling you “what” about a lexeme, but it does a poor job at telling you “why.” For instance, the Niger-Congo stem -ni- means “soul, spirit and self.” One would ask, “How does the soul relate to the self?” How does the root soul extend to become identified with the self, then a person (mani), then to a king (ani) and then to a character in the Egyptian book of Coming Forth by Day (Ani)? How does Ani of the Book of Coming Forth by Day relate to the Zulu Ena? When the term ni left Africa for Europe and became the word animus (from whence animal derived), how did this relate to totemism in ancient cultures? What did animals symbolize? In order to answer these questions correctly, you can’t simply analyze vocabulary from a dictionary: you have to be a part of a living tradition that explains the expanded meanings of these liturgical terms.

Africa’s system of education is two-fold: 1) you have a revealed front-view of information given to the public and 2) you have a concealed back-view which is reserved for initiates. The information given to those initiated is not given to the lay public and definitely not to any anthropologists. You have to earn the information you seek and being from Oxford university will not get you access to this information. It has been reported by people such as Amadou
Hampate Ba that priests are required to lie to those who are not willing to go through the trials and tribulations the normal citizens had to go through to obtain that information. This is why I regard little the information given by historians, anthropologists and linguists who have not been initiated into African systems of thought because they lack the insight, or I should say, they do not possess the keys which unlock the secrets of African cultures.

In regards to ancient Egyptian civilization, when it comes to its development and influence, you basically have two schools of thought in the African-Centered community. The first school assumes that the Nile Valley is the cradle of African civilizations and that all, or most of the cultures of Africa can be traced to the Nile Valley. Some posit that the present-day cultural similarities are “fossilizations” of ancient Egyptian culture. The second school of thought posits that there were even older civilizations in Africa, that due to extreme weather conditions in North Africa, it forced the people of the first civilizations all across to migrate all over Africa causing a population explosion in the Nile Valley in which ancient Egyptian and Nubian civilization is the result. Due to foreign invasions and other strife, over the 3000 years of “alleged” Egyptian history, some groups began to leave the Nile Valley seeking more peaceful conditions and went back into the interior of the continent whose descendents established the modern cultures we see today.

As a result of my years of research on the subject, I say it is a bit of both theories with more weight on the later. The question is, how do you account for all of the so-called Egyptian “fossilizations” in language, iconography, and religious practices all across the continent of Africa; and in some respects the world? If the cultures that we can prove have affinities with ancient Egyptian civilization are in fact remnants of ancient Egyptians, then why do we not see a replication (in full) of ancient Egyptian society in modern times in Africa? A greater question that historians fail to ask is, “If pharaonic Egypt is the result of the assimilation of African cultures over time into one political unit, what ideas are ‘Egyptian’ and what ideas are indigenous to the area?” Maybe this example will make it clearer for the reader. The Edfu text instructs us that a wave of Heru kings from the south of Ta-Meri conquered what is now Egypt and established the first dynasties. It is physically and theoretically impossible to conquer a people if there are in fact no people there to conquer. In other words, the Heru kings conquered an already established civilization with human beings residing there that had their own customs, languages and histories.

What’s most unique about Ta-Meri is that instead of replacing the cultures that existed in the conquered areas, they in-fact incorporated the native cultural ideas into the grander political culture we know today as Ta-Meri. So if this is indeed the case, we are right in asking what is native and what is not? If Egypt was the “New York” of Africa at the time, and the result of the rise of Ta-Meri is based on the influx of peoples from all over Africa, did the people all of a sudden lose ties with their ancestral homes? Did the people all of a sudden forget about where they came from and the routes to get back there? If people travelled from all over the known world to study in Egypt, did ALL of them not return back home to share what they learned?

This poses a dilemma for historians because one cannot logically imply that ALL of the “fossils” that remains in modern African cultures are natively Egyptian. What if some of those concepts are preserved in certain modern cultures because they are in-fact the originators of the ideas and practices in which the ancient Egyptians incorporated into their society? One should
be asking, why were there so many “gods” in ancient Egyptian society that served the same functions over time as other “gods”? Why do you have upwards to 10 words in the Egyptian language that represent the same concepts: for example, “to be” or “to exist” or words for “man” and “people.”

The answer to these questions is that there was a continent wide sharing of information in ancient times. For some reason historians are of the mind-set that the Egyptians stayed in one spot and did not travel to LEARN. If some do concede that some Egyptians left Egypt, they do it on the contention that they set off to conquer or teach: never to learn from others. Those of us who are familiar with how indigenous education works on the continent of Africa knows that this cannot be the case. As the Bairu proverb states, “A child who has never left home says my mother is the best cook.” In other words, it is by travelling and learning under various teachers that one gains wisdom. This is true today as it was 8000 years ago.

What historians may not be familiar with is the fact that in Africa, there is a tradition of cross continental education that has existed since before pharaonic times. Because of this tradition, the Africans have established “intellectual trade” routes that Dr. Kykosha Kajangu calls “The Super Highway of Wisdom” that wisdom seekers travelled to gain knowledge of the world and beyond. This super highway of wisdom still exists today and I posit that this is why you see identical philosophies and motifs across Africa and the world in general. Another misconception posed by anthropologists is that things like mountains and deserts were “barriers” for travel among African people. We are to believe that Europeans can survive in mountains and caves in the Caucuses, and brave the ice deserts in the arctic, but Africans do not have the fortitude to traverse the deserts of Africa to see a relative across the continent: the same people who left Africa to populate the earth? We come to find out that this is not the case and in fact is an insult to our intelligence.

I was told about this super highway of wisdom about 10 years ago by an elder master teacher. He informed me at the time that he can go anywhere in Africa and speak to elders who all learned a secret language in which they could speak to each other. This teacher of mine has been initiated into four African sacred societies that I know of. He is most active in the Yoruba system of Ifa. He informed me of some other things which I will not divulge here. Needless to say, he introduced me to an ancient practice of education that despite extreme colonial pressures, it has not been broken. I can say today definitively that this highway does in fact exist and it is the reason why Nommo of the Dogon is found among the Zulu. It is how the Kongo Dikenga became the Four Moments of the Sun in ancient Egypt. It is how the god Itn became Itongo in South Africa.

I speak about this today because we do have initiated scholars who have written about this superhighway of wisdom and it is through their writings that we will get a better understanding of exactly what it is and how African cultures influence each other to this very date. This will also put a stumbling block to those historians who claim there was no contact between Egyptians and other Black African nations. It will also explain why you find certain teachings in one area of Africa and not in the other. I can tell the reader this from the jump; Africa’s education system is hands on. You cannot simply read a lot of text books and get a handle on indigenous knowledge. As Amadou Hampate Ba states, “it is a living tradition.” Nature is the text book and there are certain things you can witness in nature in one location,
that you cannot witness in another. This is why one must travel to experience the phenomenon in its natural environment.

There are certain constellations that are not visible in certain parts of the world that you must travel there (at least back in the day) to witness. Certain herbs only grow in one spot. Certain “spirits” are native to certain environments and you must be initiated into how to properly interact with those spirits. This is why the system was set-up. At some point people became familiar with each other and who were great teachers or what not. Obviously they had to keep record of where these people were located. I have always posited that some of the stories of Egyptian texts aren’t stories, but maps to find certain teachers. This is why “Amen” would be a certain God of “this” area as opposed to some other God who is native to another area. It is all codification. Do you think they paid attention to the stars because they were trying to tell time? Or were they trying to get back home from a certain area? This is just something to think about.

Before we move forward we must define what the super highway of wisdom is. This work will primarily just be quotations from scholars who are initiates of African systems speaking about the super highway of wisdom: Credo Mutwa of South Africa, K Bunseki Fu-Kiau of the Kongo, Amadou Hampate Ba of Mali, Priest Apetu of Ghana, Kykosa Kajangu of the Kongo, and Master Naba Lamoussa Morodenibig of Burkina Faso.

It is Dr. Kykosa Kajangu who is responsible for coining the term, “the superhighway of wisdom.” Kajangu provides us with the best definition of the African Super Highway of Wisdom that I have found in print and it is his definition that will guide our study. In his book Wisdom Poetry (2006:131) he states:

I call [the] “superhighway of wisdom” the network that makes it possible to establish a dialogue of mutual enrichment among wisdom traditions. No single person is the mother of wisdom; it takes the sweat and tears of countless sages working together over thousands of years to build a wisdom tradition. Even when it is well built, a wisdom tradition cannot flourish alone for it needs to engage in dialogue with other wisdom traditions. It was for this end that ancient African wisdom traditions built a super highway of wisdom, which is still open to this day. (emphasis mine)

Kajangu asserts that in order for a wisdom tradition to thrive, it must engage in dialogues with other centers of wisdom. In ancient, and present, times, people had a hunger for knowledge and would travel the globe to get it. On pg 133 Kajangu further states that:

In the old days, wisdom seekers were constantly on the road looking for sages from whom to learn.

Early we discussed possibly why African cultures have the same symbolism and concepts in their religious teachings. Most historians posit that this is the result of a common ancestral culture in which all of the modern African cultures developed. These are the ones who posit that the common ancestral culture was that of the Nile Valley. As Dr. Kajangu will inform us, the reason why there are common motifs is because of this superhighway of wisdom in which
they have been exchanging ideas for millennia. In his unpublished dissertation titled *Beyond the Colonial Gaze* (2005), he goes on to state:

The various wisdom traditions in Africa have similar sacred arts because they have engaged in dialogues of mutual enrichment for thousands of years. It is possible to use the sacred arts to build a “super-highway” of pre-Western modes of thought and being that can aid post-postcolonial scholars [initiated scholars] in their efforts to develop compelling theories about the field of indigenous African wisdom traditions. (emphasis mine)

The most detailed account of this tradition, however, comes from Amadou Hampate Ba in his article titled *The Living Tradition* in UNESCO’s General History of Africa Vol.1. He provides for us the ins and outs of this practice and it gives us some insight on how it was carried out in ancient times. His citation is going to be a bit lengthy, but it is necessary so that we get an accurate understanding of the dynamics and purpose of this method of education. As we will see, Hampate Ba echoes many of the sentiments stated by Kajangu.

Amadou Hampate Ba discusses the life of a *doma*, or traditionalist, in the societies of the Fulani and the Bambara. He affirms the notion that one does not become wise by only learning in one’s own village and why he must travel to gain more knowledge. He goes on to state (1976:194):

Generally speaking, one does not become a *doma*-traditionalist by staying in one’s village. A healer who wants to deepen his knowledge has to travel so as to learn about the different kinds of plants and study with other masters of the subject. The man who travels discovers and lives other initiations, notes the differences or similarities, broadens the scope of his understanding. Wherever he goes he takes part in meetings, hears historical tales, and lingers where he finds a transmitter of tradition who is skilled in initiation or in genealogy, in this way he comes into contact with the history and traditions of the countries he passes through.

One can see that the man who has become a *doma*-traditionalist has been a seeker and a questioner all his life and will never cease to be one. The African of the savannah used to travel a great deal. The result was exchange and circulation of knowledge. That is why the collective historical memory in Africa is seldom limited to one territory. Rather it is linked with family lines or ethnic groups that have migrated across the continent.

Many caravans used to plough their way across the country using a network of special routes traditionally protected by gods and kings (...) Upon arrival in a strange country travelers would go and ‘entrust their heads’ to some man of standing who would thereby become their guarantor, for ‘to touch the stranger is to touch the host himself.’ The great genealogist is necessarily always a great traveler. While a *dieli* [djele, griot] may rest content with knowing the genealogy of the particular family he is attached to, for a true genealogist – *dieli* or no – to increase in knowledge he has to travel about the country to learn the main ramifications of an ethnic group and then go trace the history of the branches that have emigrated.
African Proverbs that deal with the Super Highway of Wisdom

- A child who has never left home says, “my mother is the best cook.”
- The child who travels far excels the elder of old time
- Those who have seen very little talk too much
  But those who have seem a great deal cannot find words to explain what they have gone through

Amadou Hampate Ba instructs us that sages used to travel great distances to learn and that this system integrated people from across the continent. This is very important because those who do concede that some travel took place in Africa, they claim that Africans did not travel outside of their immediate area to do so. Hampate Ba clears that up for us.

Due to colonialism, Africans have had to keep quiet about this ancient practice because of fear of death by imperial powers. Dr. Fu-Kiau in his work African Cosmology of the Bantu Kongo tells us about how the once open schools of initiation had to go underground after Europeans came into the Kongo. He states:

> Because of their closed door policy to the non-initiated [biyinga], colonial powers decreed these institutions as dangerous to the survival of colonization. Consequently, these institutions were destroyed without taking into consideration their social, cultural, educational, spiritual or moral values. Many of their unyielding leading masters [ngudia-nganga] were executed or jailed for life. The remaining masters took these institutions underground for hundreds of years for fear of reprisal from both the colonial and religious powers.” (Fu-Kiau 2001:128-129)

This statement is very important because scholars have argued that these “secret” institutions did not exist. But more so this affirms a practice that has been going on since pharaonic times. For when invaders penetrate into African societies, the priesthood always goes underground in an effort to preserve the teachings and the culture. Amadou Hampate Ba in Aspects of African Civilization: Person, Culture, Religion (1972) confirms this practice in Mali as he notes:

> As we have seen, African knowledge is a global knowledge, a living knowledge, and it is because the old people are themselves the last depositories of this knowledge that they can be compared to vast libraries whose multiple shelves are connected by invisible links which constitute precisely this “science of the invisible”, authenticated by the chains of transmission through initiation.

> In the past, this knowledge was transmitted regularly from generation to generation by rites of initiation and various forms of traditional education. This regular transmission was interrupted because of an external, extra-African action: the impact of colonization. The colonial powers arrived with their technological superiority, their own methods and their own ideal of life, and did everything in their power to substitute their own way of
life for that of the Africans. Just as one never seeds fallow ground, the colonial powers were obliged to "clear" the African tradition to be able to plant their own tradition.

Thus from the outset the Western school began to do battle with the traditional African school and to hunt down the keepers of traditional knowledges. This was the époque when all healers were thrown in prison as "charlatans" or for "practicing medicine without a license." It was also the era when children were prevented from speaking their mother tongue in order to shield them from traditional influences, to such an extent that at school, a child who was caught speaking his mother tongue had to wear a board called a "symbol" on which was drawn the head of a donkey, and he was not allowed to eat lunch.

…During the colonial period, transmission by initiation, which used to take place on a great holiday and at regular intervals, sought asylum by going underground.

This also happened in ancient Egypt and is why some of their teachers spread across the continent: to preserve Egyptian teachings. This is why ancient Egyptian concepts are not openly displayed in Africa. On a continent where Christianity and Islam have forced their way into societies and taken over traditional roles, it is understandable why certain aspects of the ancient traditions are kept secret from the public and uninitiated anthropologists. Some things are reserved for the priesthoods. The Egyptian priesthoods are not dead: they simply have new names. One can go to Arusha in Kenya right now and find elder women writing Mdw Ntr in the sand. In certain priesthoods in West Africa, after a certain amount of years in the priesthood, you learn the fundamentals of Mdw Ntr. What was once an open system has now been driven underground where only a few have directly and indirectly written about these practices.

Credo Mutwa, in Indaba my Children, talks about how the priesthood had to go underground when the Europeans came into South Africa. Not only that, he states they were doing a practice that they have done before – thousands of years ago with the Phoenicians. In describing the nature of the priesthood, and how the priests spread all over central and south Africa, he states that (1964:555-6):

When the White Man came to Africa, bringing Christianity with him, the Custodians of the Belief urged the chiefs and chieftainesses of the tribes to resist the ‘Strange Ones’ and their alien creed. But when the Bantu were finally defeated they did what they had done nearly three thousand years before when the Ma-Iti (Phoenicians) invaded the lands of the tribes: to ensure that the Great Belief would not die, they selected a number of men, and women, from every tribe and binding them by a series of High Oaths, they told them everything there was to know about the Belief. There are so many High Legends to remember and so many stores of holy men, chiefs and witchdoctors that no human mind can hold all these and yet remain sane. A custodian elect had to know so much that there was the great danger of forgetting many things, leaving what could be remembered in an inaccurate or distorted form.

There was only one way to solve this problem. The Great Knowledge was divided into many parts and subdivisions. Men were then chosen from different walks of life – blacksmiths, woodcarvers, medicine men, and others from each tribe. The blacksmiths were told everything about the history of metal-working in the lands of the Bantu, the
characteristics of the various kinds of metal and how to recognize the minerals from which these can be produced. They were told all the legends appertaining to metal and the rites and ceremonies a blacksmith must perform, and what laws he must obey, and why. The Chosen Blacksmith was under High Oath and sworn to secrecy, commanded to impart all this knowledge to his sons, and they to their sons, without adding or subtracting a single word.

The same thing was done to the Medicine-men, the Tribal Narrators, the Woodcarvers and so forth. Then, in every tribe the High Custodian formed a Hidden Brotherhood of High Custodians (Secret Society) whose duty it was continually to watch the Chosen Custodians ensuring that they had not forgotten anything, allowed nothing to leak to strangers, and imparted to chiefs and certain elders, and Indunas what they were required to know.

The Hidden Brotherhood was also there for all the Chosen Ones to Report to annually for additional checks, clarification, confirmation, and to receive new knowledge acquired in the meantime. The Hidden Fraternity also met in places where the young Chosen Ones were made to take oaths when they assumed duty. The most important obligation was to swear never to reveal the identity of any one of the High Hidden Ones, who were given (and still are given) the reverence and the respect of a Lesser God.

This is very critical information. The most important thing is the affirmation that a body of knowledge is dispersed across the continent (in fragments) and that in secret these priests meet to discuss priest business. This will be supported by high priest Apetu from Ghana further below. But for now we will review another quote from Mutwa which establishes in ancient times (and to this date) a grand BANTU culture in which these ideas were shared. He informs us that:

Among our somewhat varied early mythological legends there are versions reporting that the Tree of Life brought forth many different kinds of men. Some were big with ugly faces like that of a hippopotamus, and who walked on all fours. Others could fly like bats and yet others crawled like snakes. One day the Great Spirit tested all these different kinds in a variety of ways – in racing, fighting and numerous other endurance tests – and all these were won by muntu, the ‘two-legger’. About these legends anon.

Now the common stock, the ancestral tribe from which all the Negroid tribes of Africa sprang, was known as the Batu, or the Bantu. Legends say that this stock lived in the ‘Old Land’. According to all African folklore all our culture and religions were born in this Old Land’. This was far back in the bone and stone ages.

Where was this ‘Old Land’? It is there where the ‘Old Tribes’ are still found today – the Watu Wakale. These incorporate all the tribes of the land of the Bu-Kongo right up to the southern parts of the land of the Ibo and Oyo (Nigeria). These tribes belong to the basic stock of all such tribes who identify themselves with the prefix Ba. They are the Ba-Mileke, Ba-Mbara, Ba-Kongo, Ba-Ganda, Ba-Hutu, Ba-Luba, Ba-Tonka, Ba-Saka, Ba-Tswana, Ba-Kgalaka, Ba-Venda, Ba-Pedi,
Ba-Sutu and Ba-Chopi. The southern offshoots – the Ba-Pedi, Ba-Venda, Ba-Kgalaka and Ba-Tswana – are the oldest Bantu tribes south of the level of the Limpopo and their histories within these regions go back to a thousand years BC.

All these tribes are direct offshoots of the great Ba-Ntu nation that lived in the ‘Old Land’, as a properly organized tribe, a full 4,500 years ago, reckoned according to the genealogies. The Ba-Mileke of the Camerouns is so old that these tribesmen still speak the language their witchdoctors call ‘spirit talk’, which came down to us {the Zulus} through the Ba-Kongo and the Ba-Mbara. We use this language when communicating with the very old spirits of the ‘Ancient Ones’. This language is actually the language of the Stone Age – the first efforts by man to speak. It consists largely of grunts and guttural animal sounds in which the words we use today are faintly distinguishable.

Mutwa confirmed one of my elders sayings of their being a priestly language among the elders on the continent. Mutwa doesn’t discuss how wide spread this language is and only regulates it in the quote above to Cameroon and the Kongo. Chiekh Anta Diop also confirms the notion of a secret language among the elders of the Kabompo district of Zaire in Civilization or Barbarism. He states (1991:320):

The Woyo have a hieroglyphic writing system, the study of which has been recently undertaken by a Belgian ethnologist, according to Nguvulu Lubundi. In Zambia, an Austrian researcher, Dr. Gerhard Kubik of the Vienna University’s Institute of Ethnology, has recently discovered ideograms called Tusona, of a philosophic meaning that are known only by the old men who speak the Luchazi language in the Kabompo district; he is in the process of studying them. Therefore it is not by chance that a statuette of Osiris was found in situ in an archeological layer in Shaba, a province of Zaire.

Master Naba of Burkina Faso was an initiated healer who travelled the world teaching African science and philosophy and set up a school in Chicago called The Earth Center. Master Naba passed away in the summer of 2008. Before he died I had a chance to interview him and he brought out some information, again that was taught in sacred circles, that confirmed Mdw Ntr was not a spoken language; just a written language. As Dr. Boulos Ayad Ayad asserts (http://www.copticlang.com/cl-two-systems.php):

Chain has presented a copious and detailed study and has indicated that the Egyptian language is not a spoken language is so far as it is basically derived from Coptic, assuming that Coptic is the origin, and that the Egyptian language was used by the priests and the scribes in their written work only.

This means that the Egyptian language is the language of the Egyptian who spoke in Coptic and who used this language for scriptural purposes only. This Egyptian language was only known to scribes and totally unknown to the public.19

However, on Master Naba Lamoussa Morodenigb’s website, he discusses the nature of the Dogon that is real instructive for us in this paper. He states:
Contrary to popular belief, the Dogons are not just a small tribe that lives in Mali; Dogons are composed of many different bloodlines that represent the elite of the Pharaonic society. Dogon bloodlines include the families of: Naba (healers/priests), Woba (farmers), Yonlis (guardians of the kingship), Kediou (builders), Mende (blacksmiths), etc. These bloodlines can be found in tribes such as Gourmantche, Chibisi, Dogomba, Farafara, Sonike, Germa, etc. The Dogons once lived in the Nile Valley, but migrated inland during the invasion around 400 BC. Today, the Dogons can be found living by the bend in the Niger River.

The name “Dogon” comes from the word “dogou”, which means land. The Dogons are considered the “landlords” of Africa and their culture aims at preserving the Earth and everything that lives on it. The Dogon culture has remained uninterrupted since the time of the Pharaohs. The Dogons can be seen as Kemetic people who, during the periods of invasion, migrated so that their culture and spirituality could be kept pure. Due largely to the facts that the Dogon culture now resides in a land-locked area and that the Dogon possess deep spiritual knowledge, the culture has been preserved from colonial interruptions and influence. This cultural and spiritual preservation also is the result of very strong and strict rules of initiation (the mode by which initiation knowledge is passed from generation to generation.)

The recent works The Science of the Dogon and Sacred Symbols of the Dogon by Laird Scranton definitely confirms this statement. What’s interesting about this quote is the notion, again, of priesthoods separated by occupation, that belong to one larger priesthood (called the Dogons), which echoes in a similar manner as expressed by Credo Mutwa of the Zulus. By studying Dogon society you get a real sense of what pharaonic culture was like. They are in fact ancient Egyptians and their sacred symbols confirm it.

To confirm that this practice of travelling for knowledge is not only a west and central African thing, we will again quote Mutwa who informs us of his own travels and initiations all across Central, East and South Africa. In his book Zulu Shaman: Dreams, Prophecies and Mysteries, he tells us that (1996:18):

After I had ended initiation under my grandfather and under my mother’s sister Mynah, I wanted to learn more, so I went to Swaziland and studied there under great healers while earning a living both as a healer and as a laborer and sending money back to my father and the rest of my family. From Swaziland I went to Mozambique, which was then under Portuguese control, and there I studied under Mombai traditional healers and under Shangon sangomas and Tsonga nyangas. There I learned even more than I had learned under my grandfather. I went on to Rhodesia – today called Zimbabwe. Wherever I went in Africa, there I knelt before great teachers and I learned. I discovered how insignificant my Western education was, and how inadequate and how false in many aspects – especially where knowledge of Africa is concerned.

There are several things that the astute reader should be asking him/herself. The first question is, “How did he know where to go to find certain teachers to learn under?” How did he meet the challenge of language differences in these respective countries? How were his experiences similar or different in these ports along the super highway of wisdom? Did he take what he learned in all of these places and taught members of his own society?

These are very important questions to answer. It is impossible to visit all of these countries for initiation to study and NOT share terms and concepts. One only goes through initiation
because one feels that the wisdom gained through the experience is valuable in a practical sense, for everyday practical purposes. As we can see, Mutwa went through several initiations, which means he found these types of experiences valuable and practical.

For those who have spoken with brother Mutwa knows that he has travelled farther then south East Africa for initiations. To my knowledge he has travelled as far as Cameroon to the Sudan for initiations. He even went to Australia to learn under the indigenous there. When people read his book *Indaba My Children*, they may be under the impression that all of the stories told are Zulu stories. This is in fact not true. Brother Mutwa created a seamless story out of countless stories he has gained through initiations all across Africa. These are the histories of various African groups. If one pays attention to the book, one will realize that it chronicles the movement of the Bantu from Cameroon to the Sudan to South Africa. As Mutwa notes:

> It is through these stories that we are able to reconstruct the past of the Bantu of Africa. It is through these stories that intertribal friendship or hatred was kept alive and burning; that the young were told who their ancestors were, who their enemies were and who their friends were. In short, it is these stories that have shaped Africa as we know it—years and years ago. . . .(Mutwa 1964: xiii).

Dr. Kykosa Kajangu is one of Credo Mutwa’s students, who like Mutwa, travelled on the super highway of wisdom in which South Africa was one of his stops. He informs us in his work *Beyond the Colonial Gaze* about how Mutwa constructed the stories for *Indaba My Children*.

Drawing from these teachings, Mutwa was able to craft a cosmological poem with which he starts his book *Indaba My Children*. He wrote an initiatory text called *The Sacred Story of The Tree of Life*. This text is not a Zulu cosmological poem; rather, it is Mutwa’s rendition of the ideas about creation from the Tonga and Tonga Ila wisdom traditions. During his initiation in pre-Western modes of thought and being in these wisdom traditions, Mutwa memorized certain symbols and initiatory texts that he used as a background to craft a cosmological poem.

This is very important information to digest, because just as Credo Mutwa (one man) was able to travel along the super highway of wisdom, collect information, and retell it in a manner that is relevant to him and his people, this was/is the exact practice of ancient and modern African people (and in fact the world over).

If you are to travel along the African super highway of wisdom, one of the first things that African sages will tell you is to “Speak in your own name, never in mind.” Dr. Kajangu puts this concept into perspective in his work *Wisdom Poetry*. He explains this philosophy as such (2006:135):

> The second fundamental principle about traveling on the superhighway of wisdom is **speaking in one’s name**. Every sage that I have so far encountered on my journey to wisdom has told me as he/she was told by their mentors: “**Speak in your name, never in mine.**” What does this mean? Sages will tell you to nourish your mind with teachings that have been enriched by countless generations of sages, but they insist that **you must remain truthful to the voice that brought you into life** or the **voice of your destiny**. (emphasis mine)
It is vitally important for any student of Africa, its philosophy and traditions to understand what has just been said. It is the very reason why you find similarities in symbolism, but not exact replicas across the continent. Historians have been of the belief that in order for something to be “Egyptian” that it has to look EXACTLY like how the ancient Egyptians did it. That is not keeping with African tradition. African tradition discourages direct copying of ideas. The goal is critical analysis. Sages who dwell in wisdom centers across the continent do not want to make robots out of human beings (where they spit back what has been programmed into them). The goal is to integrate the knowledge obtained in one’s own life in a way that new revelations and techniques come out of YOUR own unique experiences.

This cannot happen if you are spoon-fed all there is to know. This is why African sages rarely answer a question directly. They will ask you a question in return and force you to come up with your own answers. This fosters critical thinking and discourages dogma as a paradigm. As Jordan Ngubane would often say, “Dogma is a prison of the mind.” So speaking in your own name allows you to be different and to come with your own conclusions. This is in alignment with the African concept of *simultaneous validity* which states that human beings cluster together in response to the challenges of their environment. How they choose to identify themselves, in response to those challenges, is their right as divine beings. Their philosophies, their customs and traditions are valid, important and legitimate. No people can prescribe destiny for other human beings and it is their duty to shape their reality in a manner that meets the challenges of their environment.

It is with this philosophy of “speaking in one’s own name” and “simultaneous validity” that *Iten* of Egypt becomes *Itongo* of South Africa. It is how *Esu* of the Yorubas become *Yeshua* (Jesus) of the Christian faith. It is how the pyramids of the Nile Valley become the Pyramids of Mexico (with different styles). It is how the spiritual customs of the Mande become the motifs we see in Olmec civilization in Mexico. It is how Amen of the Egyptians becomes Imana of Rwanda. It is how the Egyptian *Skhai* (meaning to celebrate a festival) becomes the Dogon *Sigui* festival. This exchange of ideas has been going on since before written records and it is this African social practice that makes it difficult for Africanists to pinpoint the origins of ideas without being initiated into African educational systems where they can find out.

To underscore just how prevalent this ancient practice was, recall the story of Makeda Queen of Sheba and King Solomon of the Bible. There are two records of their interaction: The *Bible* and the *Kebra Nagast*. The Bible focuses on their relationship on a meeting of the minds and exchanging gifts. The *Kebra Negast* or the *Book of the Glory of the Kings* (of Ethiopia) goes a little bit further and speaks on an intimate relationship that resulted in the birth of Menelik. For those that recall the story, Makeda sent her servant Tamrin to King Solomon of Israel to secure trade routes between the two kingdoms. Upon Tamrin’s return, he told her about Solomon’s wealth and power. After much thought, Makeda decides to make the long and arduous trip to Israel to “prove him with hard questions” (Kebraga Nagast Chapter 24; African Heritage Study Bible 1 King 10:1,2). King Solomon was famous for his wisdom through proverbs and parables. The hard questions Makeda wanted to “prove him” referred to the uncovering of the meaning of his parables and proverbs. In other words, she travelled from Ethiopia to Israel to experience the wisdom of a master teacher named Solomon. Nowhere in the book did it state that Israel was too far. The unquenchable thirst for knowledge made the journey worth while.
What should be apparent from this example is in the fact that this had to be a common practice for the Queen to just up and leave with the objective of obtaining wisdom. Makeda, Queen of Sheba, was following an ancient tradition of travelling the super highway of wisdom.

My last example of this practice comes from the year 2009 in Ghana. In March of 2009, on a Blog Talk Radio program (www.blogtalkradio.com) titled The Ancestral Study Group hosted by Abongo, Sister Nikki and Brother Ankha out of New York and Atlanta, they interviewed a master teacher by the name of Apetu who is the advisor to a group called MAMA out of Atlanta, GA. Apetu lives in Kuko village in Yendi in Northern Ghana. Apetu is of the royal lineage and a very powerful priest among the Dagomba people. Yendi is the capital for all of the Dagomba people of Northern Ghana.

During the radio interview Apetu talks about his education in various African wisdom traditions. He noted that his studies started in his home of Yendi as a young child. After completing his education in his village, he felt that there was more to know, so he left his village to go study for 3 years in Togo. From Togo he went to Benin and Dahomy to learn the spirits and Gods of those people. He stayed in Benin for 7 years. He said he had to stay long there because it was really tough having to learn all of the deities that reside there. He mentioned that the elders really liked him because he stayed a long time, so they dispensed a lot of information upon him. From there he went to Nigeria to study for two years. This is where he learned English. From Nigeria he went to Senegal to study for 3 years, where he learned that language and French. From Senegal he went back home to Ghana to become family head of his father’s house.

What’s important for our purposes here is that he is considered a very powerful shaman in his village because he travelled so extensively and learned so many secrets from various ethnic groups. Again one has to ask, how did he know where to go after each initiation to learn more? There had to be an already established system in place for him to partake of. Brother Abongo, one of the hosts of the show, is one of his students out of Atlanta. Those very teachings have made its way from Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Senegal to the United States. This same practice, as has already been established, is just part of an ancient tradition that believes one must travel and study amongst other human beings to gain knowledge. Not only that, but that one must integrate it and make it unique and applicable for your family and people back home.

**Conclusion**

What I have attempted to establish here is the knowledge of a super highway of wisdom that is responsible for the mutual sharing of signs, symbols, ideas and customs from initiated scholars who have themselves travelled along these roads. This practice is as old as Africa itself and it is this practice that wreaks havoc on the comparative method as the primary tool for establishing the relatedness of peoples and cultures. By a careful examination of what has been presented here today, we should be able to understand better why you have so many ideas that are present in the rest of Black Africa in ancient Egypt and vice versa. Dr. Yosef Ben Jochannan, another initiated scholar, talks about the Free Mason type lodge system that existed in ancient Ta-Meri (1990:67) and still exists to this date. Now we have added support to substantiate his claims of the Egyptian priesthood with “lodges” stretching from Egypt, to Palestine, Rome to Monomotapa to Zimbabwe.
Language contact makes it difficult for philologists to compare languages because it makes it harder to establish what is loan and what is indigenous. With our knowledge of the superhighway of wisdom, those may not even be relevant questions any more. The African Super Highway of Wisdom also dispels the concept of “chance” resemblance. Although a culture may be separated by thousands of miles, they still could have had contact with each other by way of mutual enrichment which makes possible the shared lexical items and motifs; without adopting a whole language system. This also explains why you do not find a full language cognate with ancient Egyptian: it is a written language only used to write the many languages of Africa for communication.

Below I have displayed evidence of a shared spiritual system that goes back hundreds of thousands of years. Examine these motifs below and see how the philosophy of simultaneous validity and “speaking in your own name” is translated into experience for African people.

Ancestrally
Asar Imhotep

http://www.asarimhotep.com
Selected Bibliography:


# African Motifs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Egypt: receptacle 4th millennium BC (Nagada period)</th>
<th>Calabash: sub-Saharan Africa today</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Egypt:</th>
<th>Mali stools (also found in Ghana)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt: Musical instruments (look at harp on the right)</td>
<td>Harp of central Africa (Gabon)</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt: snake headdress</td>
<td>Nigeria: Same snake concept</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt: Pyramid at Meidoum</td>
<td>Askia tomb Timbuktu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Egypt: Saqqara Pyramid</td>
<td>Nigeria: Nsude village shrine, Abaja, Northern Igbo</td>
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The African Wheel of Life and Healing

From Stolen Legacy Dr. George Gm James

Lou of the Voudon

Dâmballâ New Afrikan Vodûn Ancestral Order

DAGARA COSMOLOGICAL WHEEL
Ifa of the Yoruba cosmological wheel

Keep this chart in mind...

Dikenga
(Cosmogram)

V-1 Vangama [Musoni stage]

V-2 Vaika [Kala Stage]

V-3 Vanga [Tukula Stage]

V-4 Vunda [Luvemba Stage]

Nganga
(Master, Knower, Doer)

Kongo living “suns” going through its stages of conception, birth, maturity and death
Now compare this life process to what you see on Egyptian temples concerning Nut and the traversing of the “sun.”

Goddess Nut during the Ptolemaic period
The “sun” going through its life stages.
**Writing**

**IGBO Writing**

![IGBO Writing Diagram]

**Mande**

![Mande Writing Diagram]
Cosmological Wheel

Dogon Womb of All World Signs

Sideweye

Earth
Wind
Fire
Water
Bummo
Amma

Kongo Dikenga Cosmogram

Dikenga (Cosmogram)

V-1 Vangama [Musoni stage]

V-2 Voika [Kala Stage]

V-3 Vanga [Tukula Stage]

V-4 Vunda [Luvermba Stage]

Nganga (Master, Knower, Door)
Opening of the Mouth Ceremony

“Go with our tears, wet upon your face, and represent our problems among the dead: be our medium.” By similar interpretation, the open mouth, with the lips rendered in relief, symbolizes the leader speaking to the dead: “the funeral is over and now he is talking in the other world. All niombo should have open mouths. This means there is speech in the other world.” ...If the open mouth of the niombo brings parlance into the other world, and tears code messages of shared concern, the towering gesture of the niombo, right hand up, left hand down, in similarly significant. It maps the boundary to be crossed; it identifies the cord connecting life to death; it is “the crossroads pose.” ... The niombo gesture...also marks a person’s transition from this world to the next. On behalf of his community, niombo hails the heavens and the horizon line. When you die you automatically become an ancestor. But not everyone becomes a niombo. Being buried in a niombo figure means the community believes this person will become our medium.

Robert Ferris Thompson Four Moments of the Sun