

Najamba, Adia Text 2005-2a.01

speakers: X = Dimbe Gaba (female), Y = Moktar Tembo (male)

X: Is it (=recording) not being begun now? Well, in God's name. My people (= kinsmen), excuse me.¹ What we found (= inherited) from our fathers and our mothers. We found (=were born among) our fathers and our mothers. As for what there was formerly in Dogon country, we used to eat meals, we used to drink cream of millet, we used to drink milk, our mothers and our fathers used to take good care of us.

Our fathers had cows and goats, they (= family members) followed each other (= lived together). They had very good understanding among each other (= got along well). Nowadays, this does not exist. Formerly, our fathers watched carefully over their children in tranquility.

If a father watched over his child, the child would follow (=obey) his father. But nowadays, the child hasn't followed the father, and the father hasn't followed the child. What is (the reason for) that? The country (= world) is ruined. The country has become ruined to this extent.

(As for) the ruining of the country, what is (the reason for) that? It's the fact that rain [focus] doesn't fall. Now the good times² do not exist. If the good times do not exist, will there be (mutual) understanding? Will you get (mutual) understanding in (=from) a hungry person? A weary person, will something good come out of his mouth?

It's not (from) lack of wanting. A person (=adult) not loving his child, a child not loving his mother. But a child is more important than his mother. When you have a crying young baby, the day when it becomes nasty with you (= cries a lot), you have no choice but to follow (=obey) him. If you have been working, you will leave (=give up) the work. You will sit (=stay home), you will console (= pacify) it.

The child [focus] has done that. The child, if it weren't for (your) heart, you would knock (=throw) it down violently, it would die. If it has died, for its part, it's he [focus] who has come; for your part, (in) your weariness, it's you [focus] who will be sorry. All right.

Y: A child is good.

X: A child is very good. Formerly, our elders, they did (=used) fetishes (idols). Nowadays there are none. Formerly, they brewed millet beer. Nowadays there is none. Formerly, they got up and—, they went and found Najamba.³ In all of Najamba, where is it? It's at Dioni (village).

Having gone there, telling (others) to exchange (views), sitting and making all the things (= disputes) finish, killing (= cutting down) tall grass stems (to cover the sacred objects), sitting there, debating, going to Dioni, (and finally) the banging of the Hogon's stick (at the end of the meeting).

¹ Excuse spoken by a woman speaking to a group of men.

² Prosperity, especially seasonally after good rains.

³ i.e., went to the village of Dioni to have a large-scale animist ceremony (before the farming season).

We used to do everything. Saying (let's do) the harvest dance,⁴ making lots of millet beer, saying (=on account of) the idols, taking everything out (from storage), (they would) spend the day dancing and spend the night dancing.

There used to be good times (=prosperity) among us. We found (=experienced) the good times in the hand(s) of some of our elders.⁵ We too used to do it.

Well, what was the thing that made us (=led us to) leave all that? It wasn't stubbornness. It wasn't being (too) rich. Hunger is what did (this) among us. Hunger (= hungry people) never followed each other. They will have no mutual understanding. (Any) thing that a hungry person has done is bad.

But nowadays hardship (=high cost of living) has come into our country. The hardship that has come, it's because of the fact that we don't like each other (=don't get along). It's not that we don't like each other because of the overpopulation among us. It's not (from) gaining too much suddenly, nor anything else.

If the country has become hard, every person will be selfish, everyone will look out for for himself. You are looking out for yourself, you certainly won't love your child. After that, there is nothing else that is among us.

But what we found (=experienced) formerly, today also, one single wrap (woman's garment), one hundred of us women used to put on one single wrap. We nowadays, if you take hold of a garment of (even) your first cousin, (whose mothers are) of the same mother and the same father, and you put it on, you will be denigrated (= gossiped about), (saying) you are impoverished.

All right, formerly—. (Or they'll say:) you don't work, you are poor. They will denigrate you. You and I, (we are of) one mother. Now if you go out, (they'll say): Y (man's name) will say (to X's husband), don't you see? X (name of woman who has gone out) is very shiftless (good-for-nothing)." Eh.

Y: God didn't give everyone the (same) character.

X: It's definitely not X's shiftlessness. It's you-Sg [focus] who are involved in humiliating X. All right, I too, if you-Sg have gone out, don't you see? As for Y, all these pals (agemates) of his do like that (to him). These pals of his have prospered.

It's God's giving. It has arisen in (=due to) God. We have left (=abandoned) all these (things). The fact that we have rejected God, God is repaying us for that.⁶

If you-Sg are excessively bad, prosperity will not come to your village. If you are are not respectful (to your elders), you won't get respect (from others). If you haven't covered (= been protective of) a person, they will not cover you. God doesn't like humiliation (of people).

⁴ lit. "rainy-season dance." It was formerly performed at the beginning of the harvest.

⁵ Some people held onto their animist ritual objects, while others discarded or sold them (under the influence of Islam).

⁶ Lit. "is repaying that credit among us."

What has descended on us nowadays, it's humiliation. The humiliation does not benefit us. May God protect us. God definitely doesn't protect us for nothing. If you-Sg don't remain the way one ought to, by God, let's remain the way one ought to.

If you have followed your child, if you have held (= watched over) your wife, may your wife too hold you. (If) there is no mother and there is no father, your husband is your father. If your husband has blessed you, it (= blessing) will take hold.

As for us, formerly we and our elders saw (= experienced) like that. Formerly, our elders, this covering (e.g. blanket), (like) this (blanket) that covers me now, when night would fall, when they had taken it off and given it, we would cover ourselves with it. When they had gotten up in the morning, they would wrap it around themselves, they would go outside.

Nowadays, your child, the clothes have been filled (= stuffed) into a trunk, the (other) clothes have been laid out (on the ground), the (other) clothes have been hung on the wall of the house. Hunger is killing you, (and) you don't watch over your husband.

One day your husband will go outside with (= having drunk) plain water.⁷ Will you and someone who has gone outside with plain water (be able to) get along? There will be no mutual understanding (= good relations). All right, when a man's heart is ruined (= he is unhappy), if he has taken a woman (= gotten married), the woman doesn't respect him. She is nasty.

Saying (= thinking) that she is nasty, you have discarded (= divorced) her. She is nasty, (and) you have discarded her, then you have taken (= married) a crazy woman (as a new wife) now. You have definitely added to that misfortune for yourself. The bitterness has never left you. That person (= man) has added to his bitterness.

But, may God receive us in that predicament. May God keep us away from what is bigger than us (= calamity). If we do our best, if we head for (there) where our elders were in the past, Almighty God has much. If you are deferential (= obedient) to your father, God will cover (= protect) you.

Y: Your child will be deferential to you.

X: Your child—. If you are deferential to your father, your child will be deferential to you. If you are deferential to your mother, your child will be deferential to you. If you leave (= treat) your mother and your father as your own (true) parents,⁸ your wife will be deferential to you. When you now have gone nowadays and found (= met with) your parent, if I find now that you are insulting (= being disrespectful to) your parent, if (seeing this) I (= your friend) hit (= slap) your parent on the side of the face, is it impossible?

Y: Definitely, you (the child of the parent) have given (= initiated) the hitting.

X: You have given (= initiated) the hitting. He didn't protect yours (= your parent). If now you have taken yours (= your parent) and put him in the market, don't the people look at him?

Y: It is that way.

⁷ i.e. without any breakfast.

⁸ sá:rà: 'parent' applies to one's actual mother and father, and is extendible to their younger same-sex siblings.

X: Formerly, the people used to go crazy. If they went crazy, they (= others) treated them, it (= craziness) went away. There is the hand of a human, (and) there is the hand of God.⁹ God has done (= is responsible for) that which is in the hand of God. What has come out of the hand of a human and has been produced (by the human) is not the same¹⁰ as God's.

But God likes (= tolerates) an evil-doer. The fact that He likes an evil-doer, what is (the reason for) it? It's punishment in the future ("tomorrow"). In the Hereafter (= Afterworld), a great punishment will follow him. Indeed, we heard that in (= from) our elders' mouth(s). We found (= experienced) our fathers and mothers.

Our father said: hey you, in speech there is definitely something that is bigger than (what comes from) your mouth; in food there is something that is bigger than (what you put in) your mouth. He said: if you have gone out to the bush and gotten some food, having eaten what is possible (= fits) in your mouth, that which is not possible (= does not fit) in your mouth you must bring and give to your parents.

Nowadays, your parent is lying down in the house, (while) you have gone out to the bush, you have roasted your sizzling fatty meat and eaten it (out in the bush), and you haven't given (any) to your parent, and you haven't given (any) to a single (= any) wife of yours or to a single child of yours.

Well, is there a (parental) blessing here?

Y: There is none.

X: Like that—, if we were (= behaved) like that (i.e. in the old way), prosperity will remain in this land of ours.

Y: Tomorrow the debts—.

X: If you have done good (deeds), may God repay you (for) what you have done. If you are angry (=evil),¹¹ you have not done good (deeds). (Please) continue your talk!

Y: If these (behaviors) [focus] are what we have followed, God will bring down (= provide) prosperity for us. But if we have not followed these (behaviors), suffering will not lag behind us.

We have suffered, we have been hungry. There is no talking (= discussing among ourselves), there is no good work. But may God cover (= remove) that for us. If we follow Him (= God), He will definitely cover (= protect) us. If we don't follow Him, He will not cover us.

Looking at us, our elders, (garments of) yellow bogola dye (from *Anogeissus* tree), what women wore, ugh!¹² Men, they used to wear this (too). Cowhide shoes, they used to wear them, (of) cowhide. Nowadays, if you have your wife wear cowhide (shoes), will it **turn out well** for you?

⁹ I.e. some crazy people are cured by human intervention, others only by God.

¹⁰ Lit. "what... and what ... are not one."

¹¹ lit. "your heart has defecated."

¹² 'Ugh!' expresses the attitude of today's women to old-fashioned bogola clothing (colored with vegetable dyes).

All right, (formerly) not everyone could get cowhide. By God, if you saw someone wear cowhide (shoes), he was rich, (it was as though) he was wearing a living one (= cow).¹³

Y: Exactly. Formerly like that [focus] is how it was.

X: Plastic shoes now, what good was it?¹⁴ Was it not plastic? What was it for?¹⁵

Y: It would melt.

X: Well, that [focus] was a herder's share. But if you wore cow(-hide) shoes, (it was as though) you were wearing a (whole) cow. Definitely not everyone could get it, It's what we call "patas monkey's chance."¹⁶ May God make our end (= destiny) good.

But it has been truly difficult on us. In the thing(s) that we saw formerly, there is not even a single thing that we (still) see nowadays, other than in the aftermath of troubles: (people) dying young¹⁷ and bad diseases. Furthermore, when we catch a disease, we cannot treat ourselves (medically). (They say:) arise and get old! You are dead.

In the place(s) where they used to treat (sick people), now they don't treat (people). One person doesn't know anything, (but) he claims to be a healer. Has he (= sick person) gone out and walked around? The sick person doesn't know whether (= that) God is there. He (= sick person) will follow him (= healer). He (= healer) will fleece¹⁸ him, (he will) eat (him), totally. He will die.

All right, in Dioni (village), at Go,¹⁹ they treat (the sick). There used to be praying to (animist) God. We don't go to Go (any longer). It was (also) at Lamordé, (but) we don't go. It was at Dindari, (but) we don't go. It was at Adia, (but) we don't go. It was at Gundapari, (but) we don't go. It was at Ogoyeri, (but) we don't go. It was at Dembeli, (but) we don't go. It was at Tabako, (but) we don't go. We don't go to Mougi.

Najamba (country) went and bounded itself there in the Débééré area. We have left (= ceased practicing) all that. We have taken out (= adopted) our religion (= Islam). In adopting our religion, there is nothing (=no benefit) that we have seen. If I find that you have one hundred cows today, if I come (back) in a couple of days, the cow is (just) one.

Y: They have finished (= died off).

X: Formerly, that single (woman's) wrap definitely served us well. Since—

Y [overlapping]: That—. Excuse me (for interrupting). We have turned away from that (= old customs). It will remain like we want (it). I will do something bad, I will do something short²⁰ too, even if it's not good I will do it too.

¹³ I.e., one who wore cowhide shoes was displaying his wealth (in cattle).

¹⁴ Lit. "what will it become?"

¹⁵ Lit. "what is it following?"

¹⁶ Monkeys accidentally happen on food.

¹⁷ lit. "unripe death."

¹⁸ lit. "hit" (using a Fulfulde borrowing).

¹⁹ A secret place with an underground spring.

²⁰ i.e. on a whim, without much reflection.

Formerly, if you-Sg did the bad thing, the fetish (= idol) would show you immediately. Likewise, if you did the good thing, it would show you immediately. Well, nowadays, whether it pleases or doesn't please someone, I will do (it). I will remain (= live) as I please.

God too, in this (base) world, doesn't take out (a person) and show you at all that So-and-So is an evil-doer. (If) you have done a certain type of evil, He (= God) will bring down a catastrophe in the land, perhaps as for you, you don't care.²¹ You're (still) doing it (= evil).

Formerly, the fetish, if you did (something), it would show you immediately. Nowadays, we have said (it's) praying (= Islamic worship), (but) we haven't followed (= been consistent with) the praying either. There is no candor.²²

Trickery, and swindling, and stealing, and let's-take-what-is-not-ours, because those (things) [focus] are what have us nowadays. Have you not seen that we will remain (= live) as we want? It is what made us leave the fetish.

But continue your talking.

X: Well, this place is not worthwhile. You have given your child (= daughter) to a man (as his wife). Perhaps (= let's say) you have given your child to the man. As for us, as for the elders that we found (= grew up with), if now my father took me (a woman) and gave me (as wife) to a person—, to a man, (then) if the man saw my father, he would show shame.²³ If the man saw my mother, he would show shame.

All right, the man, having taken (= married) your child, if you-Sg gave (her) to a man, if (then) that man did not show shame to you, (it suggested that) it was not the case that the woman was good (well-behaved at home). By God, if the woman was good, if you (= husband) came across your father-in-law (on a path), you would treat your father-in-law royally.²⁴

If you did not treat your father-in-law royally, (it suggested that) your child was not in (= doing) good work (at home). You have given your child (to him). Your child having gotten up in the morning, (you [= her mother] say): “Hey So-and-So (= husband), the man, good morning!” (Husband:) “Good morning to you!” (Mother:) “Me indeed, give me So-and-so (= your wife)!” (Husband:) “Where is she going?” (Mother:) “I want to send her to such-and-such a place.” (Husband:) “Yes? All right.”

If he has given (his wife) to you with his permission, he has permitted (= authorized) you. If he hasn't permitted you, you have shut up. But nowadays if you (= her mother) get up, if she the woman gets up, she will get up (and go) entirely on her own business. (Husband:) “Where have you gone?” (Wife:) “I went to my mother.” (or:) “Where have you gone?” “I went to my father.”

²¹ lit. “your business doesn't exist.”

²² Lit., “heart-cleanness.” One who has a “clean heart” speaks what is in his heart (= what he/she really believes or cares about) rather than concealing or disguising it. Opposite is *kèndà-nǐ:ndú* ‘heart-dirtiness’.

²³ Refers to (respectful) deference to a parent-in-law.

²⁴ E.g, crouching obsequiously to greet him.

Well, God didn't say that. Formerly, they followed (e.g. obeyed) each other. If you were going to send (your child) to the market, (even) before market (day) had come, you would request (his permission), and he for his part would permit (= authorize) you. If he didn't permit (you), on the other hand, there was no forcing (him).

Formerly, if your wife did something bad, they used to beat your wife. Nowadays, if you beat your wife, some nosy person won't leave you in peace. The whole country will be (people calling out) "Ho!" The person has never seen you, (but) he says "Ha! So-and-so is bad." You have never brought me (= had trouble with me), (but you say) "So-and-so is bad." Formerly there was none (of that). As for us, we found our mothers and our fathers, there was none (of that).

But nowadays, that (new behavior) has dawned. This place has destroyed us. We did not realize it. (If) we had (an opportunity) to go back, we would escape. (But) if we do not go back now, prosperity won't come to us. But I mostly would like (to have) the prosperity of former times. May God give us the prosperity of former times.

Y: Nowadays, if you have borne a child, they don't let you beat the child, never mind (beat) the woman. It's you [focus] who gave birth to²⁵ the child. Why is that? Because if you say, me now if I get up like that, if my child has done something bad to me, if I have (then) picked up a branch (for whipping), (they'll say:) "No! So-and-so!" Everyone is like that.

Let's get together and ruin (= change) the situation where everyone is like that. Because I cannot scold mine (= child). If you scold yours, yours will be prepared (= taught) and will surpass me (in life). As for that, let's ruin (= change) that. (That) everyone is like that, it isn't good.

Why is that? Because each village has its character (= behavior, rules).²⁶ Each household has its character. Each person has his character. They say, it was like that in the past. Nowadays, we have all learned one (= the same) behavior. Let's get together and ruin (= change) that.

Continue your talk.

X: Nowadays—. Formerly, you-Sg were (of) one (= the same) mother and (of) one (= the same) father, if you had nothing, as for your full sibling,²⁷ he (or she) was (always) your full sibling. All right now, Y [vocative], (let's say) you and I are full siblings. If I don't have a (certain) thing, you will go and become friends with a rich man.²⁸

The rich man is (= becomes) your father, (and) the rich man is your mother. You don't love your (real) mother, (and) you don't love your father. You don't love your wife, (and) your own child.

Ah! (Let's say) you-Sg and I are full siblings. "Oh Y [vocative], give me this child of yours, I will send him/her to this (= such-and-such) place." If I say (that), you will say that you won't give (him/her) to me.

²⁵ Here in the sense '(man) sire (child)'.

²⁶ Lit. "a village and its nature."

²⁷ Lit. "your mother-one-father-one."

²⁸ Lit. "pull down friendship."

Suppose that we two are full siblings. If the rich man comes, if he says “Y [vocative], give me this child of yours, I will send him/her to this place,” (you’ll say) he should take (him/her).

Y: Indeed. It isn’t even worth that. At my place, if he (= rich one) has said we should do this thing, I will call my child and tell (him/her) to go and do this.

X: Well, perhaps he asked (requested of) you and didn’t get (anything)—

Y: If I go, my full sibling (sister), (I’ll) say, she is extremely bad. “You cannot help a person in anything, (yet) you can afford (to have) a child. It benefited the child, because we raised the child together. Because as for the child, it is the child of everyone (= all of us). (Suppose) a person will have (= bear or sire) a child and will die leaving the child (behind), in whose hand(s) will you (= the person) leave it (= child)?

X: You’ll leave it (= child) for your people (= kin).

Y: If you also leave it for the rich man that you have thought of, he (= rich man) will say that it (= child) is a slave. What will he (= rich man) say? If he has raised it (= child).

X: By God, it is his slave.

Y: Yes. But your housemates (e.g. siblings) who were born together, having one mother and one father, if you have raised a child, you cannot (say) that he is a slave, can you?

X: The elders said, friendship has become pleasing (= precious). Friendship is pleasing, to the point that it’s hard (to find) anything like that. Perhaps he has nothing to eat, he has no woman (= wife), his mother and his father are gone, he’s an orphan. His friend is a very rich man. He (= orphan) having done that, (they said) all right. We heard that from the mouth(s) of our elders.

The field (of one) was the next field over (from the other’s). When his (= rich man’s) wife had cooked a meal and had come, he said, “Woman!” She told him to call his friend (the orphan). She asked: had he called him? (No) he hadn’t called (him), he said. She said, all right.

When he had laid down his daba (hoe), and had gone up into a tree, he said (= called out) “Hoy!” (He replied:) “Hoy!” “Come, let’s eat a meal!” The other one (= orphan) too went up into a tree, the orphan, (and said) that, as for him, hey, he was full (= not hungry). When he (= orphan) had said that, before they had come and put their hands (in the bowl), (sound of running), he came. When he came, they would eat the meal.²⁹

They kept doing that (every day), until (they) had come and done the farm work. Without (anyone) hearing (= knowing) about that,³⁰ they did the harvest. Then, the day when they went (back) into the houses (= village), they did the post-harvest celebration. (Chief:) “it’s like this, you Muslims who are here.” “Yes,” they (= villagers) said.

²⁹ The orphan would loudly imply (to other villagers) that he could feed himself, then would eat (secretly) with his rich friend and the latter’s wife.

³⁰ Lit. “without the mouth going up.”

(The rich man) said, “So-and-so (= name of orphan) is my slave.” (Others asked:) “So-and-so is your slave? Where did the slavehood arise?” (Rich man:) Lunch after lunch, all during the rainy (= farming) season until now, he (= orphan) has spent the whole rainy season eating his (= rich man’s) meal(s); when his (= rich man’s) wife had cooked the food, it was together [focus] that we ate that meal.” He (= orphan) said, “Is that so?” He (rich man) said: “yes.” He (= orphan) said, “please.”

They (= villagers) asked: was it meals, or what? He said, that’s it. (By virtue of) the fact that he act that meal, he (= orphan) was his slave. They told him (= orphan) to pay. He said, all right. They asked him (= rich man), hey, was his finished?³¹ He said, it was finished. They asked him, hey, was his (talk) finished? He said, yes. They said, all right.

He (= orphan) said: hey you people, all those people who were there together (= in nearby fields), he said. They said, yes? (Orphan) said, what he used to call out to So-and-so (= rich man), did they not use to hear (it)? They said, they used to hear (it). He (= orphan) asked: did he (= rich man) not use to call? They said: he used to call. He (= orphan) asked, was his (= rich man’s) (talk) finished? He (= rich man) said, yes.

He (= orphan) said, all right, hey Muslims who were neighbors for him, when he (= rich man) called him (= orphan), had they (= neighbors) not heard him (= orphan) say “I am full (not hungry) (for) the meal.” They said, by God, they had heard.

They asked (the rich man), hey, was it a meal, or what (that made the orphan a slave)? He (= rich man) said, it was a meal. They said: when you called him, he used to say he was full (= not hungry), and he didn’t eat your meal.

In that (way), his (= orphan’s) path was good. That [focus] is how he escaped. But (as for) you, (in view of) how friendship is good, don’t leave your poor father. You, (in view of) how friendship is good, follow (= stay with)—don’t leave your poor cousin. Tomorrow, early in the morning, a cousin, it’s blood (= kinship), it (= kinship) doesn’t leave each other.

Your words. When you have eaten your meal(s) in secret (= alone), your words, (they said) hey, don’t eat— (or rather) don’t speak your words in secret (= alone). Well, as for us, that [focus] is how we heard it from the mouth(s) of our elders. But nowadays, it’s only (between) two rich people, the one from behind (= pauper) doesn’t go in (= is not included). Well, may God keep us from the harm of that.

The land has become bad for us. (Actually) the land hadn’t become bad, we [focus] have become bad. The people said, the world (of the living) isn’t like (it was) formerly, it isn’t like (it was) formerly. (But) it was like (it was) formerly. It is we [focus] who have changed.

Ever since we have seen the sun, the sun rises here (pointing to east), (and) the sun sets over there (pointing to west). Has the sun gone away from (= moved) (the place) where it used to rise?

Y: (No) it hasn’t gone away.

³¹ Lit. “go down”.

- X: Has it gone away from (= moved) (the place) where it sets?
 Y: (No) it hasn't gone away.
 X: We haven't found this day (= these times)?
 Y: (Yes) we have found (it).
 X: (The same way) as we found (it), we will leave it (behind) as well and go. We have ruined (wasted) ours (= our world). We found (= inherited) it, we will leave it and go.
 Y: The moon and the sun, ...
 X: (Did you say) the moon and the sun?
 Y: ... Indeed they exist.
 X: They exist, even nowadays. Night and day, they exist even nowadays.
 Y: Each person, in his time. (As for) them, they all—. What little imagery they (= elders) found for us, their own existed. If ours does not remain, (it's because) we did (it to) ours. Truly God didn't do it to us. God didn't do that. (It's) a thing that God didn't bring (= do), that we alone put (= brought). What (things) God didn't create for us, we will look for (= try to make). It doesn't go in (= doesn't work) for us, unless God too has given it to you.
 X: As for you, just don't (try to) bring Him down.
 Y: Your lying doesn't give you (anything), your conniving talk doesn't give you (anything), your betrayal doesn't give you (anything), and your gossiping doesn't give you (anything). (Regarding) what (things) you have taken there from God and come (with), you didn't take (things) that were like what you ought to take. If you take³² what you ought to take, by God, tomorrow it's your downfall.³³
 Y: As we heard formerly, they said that a man and a woman, their property did not remain separate. If the man (= husband) grew some cotton, when they picked the cotton, when they gave (it) to the women, when the women spun the cotton, when they (= women) put (it) in the hand of the man, when they gathered it all, when they bought an animal, it belonged to the man.
 They picked up (= supported) each other. A man (had) one pair of pants, a woman likewise it was just that one wrap. In every house, if there was one good boubou (garment), anyone who was an (adult) man, he would dress up elegantly with that (same boubou).
 Among women too, they, among (their) female matrilineal relatives, (if there was) a single wrap, (and) if there was a single nice boubou (robe), they all³⁴ used to go into the village with them (= garments), they said. We heard that. The boys don't support you.
 X: Those words are the truth. Those words indeed are the truth. But (as for) the people, one person, the (= his) body is (just) one, the mouth is (just) one, the speech is (just) one, and the joint is one. But these (body etc.) are here. These are five (in number).³⁵

³² Emend to 'do not take'.

³³ Lit.: "it's falling and you."

³⁴ i.e. any one of them, on different occasions.

³⁵ Actually the speaker had listed four items.

In the same way that these are not equal, people are not equal. If people have not become equal like that, it's too bad but we too are not equal. It (= population) will never be equal. Never, since God made the Creation, has it (= population) become equal, and it won't become equal. It hasn't (ever) become equal, just like the fact that it won't become equal.

One who is better (= richer) than you-Sg, if you leave him where he is better than you; your pal (of same age), if you leave him where he is your pal; then, you, while you watch (him) he is born, he will emerge (succeed), he is indeed better (= richer) than you.

There is indeed one who is better (= richer) than you. He is better than you. (Regarding) the basis for his superiority over you, it isn't (trying to) make someone feel bad. In the world, one is simply saved (= gets by).

All right. Formerly, the people did among each other, in the street, if you came across your comrade(s) (of same age), they were feeding you a (sorcerer's) potion, (or) they were stabbing and killing you with knives, (or) they were cursing you by a fetish and killing you. All these (things) they used to be doing.

All right, nowadays, in this same way that we carry (on the head) a load that is bigger than us, there was none (of that) formerly. All right, formerly, if they killed each other's children, they were told to go to Nga and speak. Curses would be made. When they did the post-harvest feast, (then) they were told to speak there. Curses were made.

All right, nowadays, you go into your house, you go into the interior of your house, (and) something that you have done, either a trouble-maker or a crooked person will carry it and fling it down in a place where we have no power.

Y: If you go outside, you'll find people talking (about you).

X: If you go outside, everyone (is going) "ha! You think you have left (= stopped planting) at your father's place(s)."³⁶ Before you go away from that, it (= gossip) is all around outside.

Well, you take it (= words), you are throwing yourself into a burden that you can't manage. You don't have any pants, you don't have any shoes, you don't have any boubou (garment), you don't have a father, (yet) you go to a place where you have no power, and you criticise (= gossip about) me (there). Did that help you?

"I went." What (= money) you were supposed to go and deposit there (to initiate a police proceeding against someone), you buy your grain and give it to your child, you buy your grain and give it to your wife.

Formerly, (there was) a single garment, it was the (woman's) wrap. You (= mother) would get up and spend the whole day carrying the child (on your back). You would come at night, and that (same) garment [focus] was what you would cover the older infant with. You would cover (them) up, and you bring yourself out all right (= avoid gossip).³⁷

³⁶ I.e., you believe that you are planting up to but not beyond the boundaries of the field you inherited, just as your father did.

³⁷ lit. "(you) got your head past."

Y: They came out all right too.³⁸

X: All of them came out all right. Okay, we remained (like that) for a long time. We used to see fragmentarily. (Even) what we used to see fragmentarily (in the past) has come and vanished for us. That is all gone. There is nothing that we have gotten. (With) what little you have gotten, you don't (= can't) eat or drink. You will take it and give it to someone who is better (= richer) than you? If you say (= intend) to be equal to one who you are not (actually) equal to, it's your misfortune.

Well, only that has come to us nowadays.

Y: That [focus] is a bothersome problem.

X: That thing has bothered us. We haven't seen (= gotten) any benefit in (= from) it. Both morning and afternoon, nothing but bothersome problems. God—, God definitely didn't bring (the problems) to us. As for us, we have become the trouble-makers for ourselves. It's we [focus] who destroy each other.

Before we recognize that, we have become rags (= old and worn-out). Your sick person is lying (in bed), and you can't treat him (medically). If you slap someone who is better (= richer) than you, you pay millions. Your sick person is lying (in bed), and you can't treat him (medically). In looking for words (= stirring up trouble), you'll go and pay 1000 francs. What good did it do you?

Y: It didn't help.

X: A trouble-maker didn't help. But a trouble-marker put the squeeze on us. He won't help us, other than troubling us.³⁹ But as for God, God, He took a good look (at the trouble-maker). If He hasn't cursed us, He hasn't blessed us.

All right, one who does bad work (= deeds)—, if you do bad work to your father and your mother, if God wills, if he hasn't cursed you, he (also) hasn't blessed you. It isn't (cause for) weeping (out loud), sob-sob-sob, (but) weeping is in the heart. It isn't (cause for) weeping (out loud), sob-sob, (but) weeping is in the heart.⁴⁰

“So-and-So, I like (love) you!” It isn't worth⁴¹ shouting (that). If it's in your heart, people will see (that). “So-and-So, I don't like you!” It isn't worth speaking (that). If it is in your heart, it will be seen in your work (= actions). For us, it is something empty. Instead, if I just let So-and-So (whom I don't like) go out, (saying) let him go out and walk around (on his own)! (Then) he doesn't walk around. May God give us the peace of that.

Y: May God make the child fortunate. Well, now, that which is among us young people, now, if you-Sg get up and go to the city, as for you, you eat something good, you drink something good, and you sleep on something good. (Meanwhile), potash water [focus] is what your father here (in the village) is drinking.

³⁸ lit. “their heads got past.”

³⁹ Lit. “except our weariness.”

⁴⁰ It's best to suffer in silence.

⁴¹ Lit. “it hasn't gone out” (after a chained verb ‘shout’).

You have obtained ten riyals (= 50 francs CFA), that is a too much. (Or say) it's five riyals (= 25 francs), just a little, that you have obtained. If you give it (= money) to him (= your father), (he'll say) "by God, my child (= son) has given me this thing, may God do the same for him!" It (= blessing) will be accepted (by God).

Because the holy men have said, hey (you). Whether I go to a holy man, or I go to a sekoudio (type of holy man). (But) the first blessing, it's (from) your father and your mother.

Well, now, your child, he eats good thing(s), he is in a car, he is on a motorcycle. (Meanwhile) you (= the parent) don't have any shoes. He doesn't even greet you. Do you not curse him?

X: You cursed him.

Y: Well, the Dogon (say) a curse has never fallen on the land (= been inactivated). It (= curse) doesn't come down on an ordinary land. It (= curse) will reach (= catch up to) him. If your kinsman has blessed you, it will reach (you), if you think (about it), and (likewise) if he has cursed you, it will reach (you).

Well, now what is with us nowadays, now you are here beside your kinsmen at the house. As for you, you are suffering all (forms of) suffering. He (= your father) sends you, you do farming, you do everything. As for him (= one working in distant city), he walks around however he likes. He remains there for a long time, then the day when he comes (back), if they don't replaster this house, will it stand (= be accepted)?

X: Never, it will not stand.

Y: An animal, if they (= herders) haven't taken (it) to pasture, it won't remain. If they don't cultivate millet, there will be nothing to eat. When you do all that, another man (not of your immediate family) will be relieved of his disappointment. Because the one who escapes his disappointment is the one who is at home.