Mani, a Disappearing Language of Sierra Leone and Guinea

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Mani History

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When people speak of ‘up’ and ‘down’, they usually mean ‘north’ and ‘south’ but it could be from the highlands to the coastal plane

History of the Mani / Histoire des mani

Récit de Morlaye Boyo Keita
Palatougou, vendredi, le 15 janvier 2005

Greetings, etc.

jd  Ḗ mɔrlɛɛ, ɛ sɛkɛ-ɛ
Papa Morlay, good morning!
Papa Morlaye, bonjour!

mb  ahaan, yomu n sakay seke!
  aháán, yómu ɛ sàká-ɛ sèkè
  yes grandfather 2sg pass.morning well
Thank you, old man, good morning!
Oui, mon vieux, bonjour!

jd  ɛ sèkè
You have spent the morning well?
Bonjour!

mb  iyɔ màmò!
Yes, thanks!

French stops here!

jd  lɔ mɔ ki ya?
  lɔ mɔ kí ɡà
  pro 2sg pro q
Where are you?

mb  ka dipal atuk lɔ hi ki.
  kà dí-pál-àtòk lɔ híkì.
in Palatougou pro dem
We are fine (here) in Palatougou (lit. ‘ncm-sun-atop’).

jd  ubɔr mɔ, kɔ ɲɛy
  ë-bɔr mɔ, kɔ ɲɛ-ɲ
ncm-family 2sg pro 3pl-i
Your family is here?

mb  ɲan bulɛŋ, ɲa ɲɛy.
  ɲà-n bulɛn, ɲá ɲà-ɲ
They are all here.

What language do you speak to them?

I speak Mani to them.

Nowadays, some do understand it, some don’t.

My mother died a long time ago.

My father is also dead.

Oh! since
Oh! Did they die a long time ago?

mb kabi kace. nèn tigber ta wòm ki.

kà bí kàcè. nèn tì-gbèr tè wòm kì.

pro have formerly year ncm-much pro now dem

It was a long time ago. This happened many years ago.

jd ye npace ma mò nya kekeco ya

yè n-pànt mà mò nyà kékècò yà

what ncm-work pro 2sg do now q

What kind of work do you do now?

mb fò npace mu bulò cey, (unintelligible word) kaŋka sòtò uyo mi.

fò n-pànt mú bùlò cè-ì, (...) kànkà sòtò ù-yò mì.

must ncm-work with farming def (...) so that get ncm-eat lsg

I have to do farming work in order to get something to eat.

jd mò be upeley?

mò bè ì-pèlè-ì

2sg grow ncm-rice-i

Do you grow rice?

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mb ya be peley.

yá bè pèlè-ì.

1sg grow rice-i

I grow rice.

jd lakò cè a

lákò cè yà

garden def q

What about a garden?

mb Ṉone npace nlàn, má ñcance.

ŋnè n-pànt ñ-làn, mà-i cânce

dem ncm-work emph-pro pro-i principal

It is our principal work.

jd ṇò fo yenkelen?

ŋò fò yènkèlèn

pro grow well

Does things grow well?

mb ṇò fo yenkelen!

ŋò fò yèŋkèlèŋ

pro grow well

They grow very well.
Purpose in coming

Well, the reason why we came to your house, why we are here this morning,

We came in order for you to show us,
Na ≠a taruxu Na, ño deni kēyn?
ñānā tārūxū Na, ñō dénkēn
dem history 3pl pro loss
this history of the Mani that has been lost,

ñoy hun hali hun tun,
ñō-i hun hali hun tun
pro-i come for come search
it is to come find out (about it).
we came to look for it,

alago señbe mo ño nyay,
àlāgō sēnbè mō ñō nyá-i
so.that power 2sg pro do-i
because only your knowledge will provide it.

kaŋka si bō si taruxu amana ce.
kāŋkā si bō si tārūxū à-màn à-cē
so.that 1pl able know history ncm-Mani ncm-def
so that we will know the history of the Mani.

lay mō ña, iso'y ce ñono.
lā-i mō ña, ī-sō ī-cē ñōñō
pro-i arrive pro ncm-morning ncm-def pro
This is why we came this morning.

mb awa, udenken ce, n hō lō ya?
āwā, ù-dēnkēn cē, ñ-ñō lō yā
okay ncm-loss def emph-pro pro q
All right, the loss of the language, in which way?

Hali si dena ken hō ya?
hālī sī dēnā kēn ñō yā
for know thing like how q
To know the thing in what way?

jd mba, ken kasabi ce, ñō manidi ce, le kō cáp,
mbā, kēn kāsābī cē, ñō mànī dī-cē, lē kō cáp
okay, like history def pro Mani ncm-def pro go start
All right, like the history, how the Mani culture, it started.

lā ña kō fōk hááän, là hun sōtō kākī yō
pro pro pro come.out until, pro come get here prt
from where they arose until they got this place.
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mb mb mhmi.
Right.

jd taruxu ce ηone, ηo yema hali si.
tarixu ce ηonē, ηo yēmā hålī si.
history def dem, pro want for know
This is the history that we want to know.

mb áwà.
All right.

jd lay mæ ηa.
lā-i môê ηa.
pro-i arrive pro
That is why we came here.

mb awa, si ηay, abena ce pere ηa ηay.
awa, sī ηâ-i, â-bên â-cē pêrê ηânâ-i,
okay, lpl pro-i ncm-old ncm-def also dem-i.
All right, we are here, the old are here.

awa, sêno ya.
awa, sënô yâ.
okay, welcome here
All right, welcome.

jd iyô.
All right.

mb kaŋka yeleŋ lan, ηo piŋkin heri.
kànkan yêlɛn là-n, ηo piŋkĩn herĩ.
so.that behind pro-emph pro become good
Thus, it is what is behind (the past); it becomes good.

jd āminâ.
Amen.

**History begins**

mb sin si ηa ka,
sî-n sī ηâ kâ,
1pl-emph 1pl 3pl here
Us, we are here,

nlay teke amana ce woy;
n-la-i têk-yê à-mân à-cê wô-i
emph-pro-i hear-stat ncm-Mani ncm-def prt-i
with what has been heard (about) the Mani people,

jd námù.
Yes.

mb iyomi hin,
ī-yōm ī-hī-n
ncm-ancestor ncm-1pl-emph
Our grandfathers,

ŋənə háán nya lın si hun mœ kaki yəy,
ŋənə hī nyá háán si hūn mə̀ kàkī yɔ́-i,
how 1pl manage until 1pl come arrive here prt-i
how we managed (what we did) until we came to arrive here,

**The war led by Sunjata drove them there**

upEMU ce ko ka senyi koŋ çok.
ù-pēm ù-ce kò kà sèn-ì kò ñ-tók.
ncm-war ncm-def to here sow-cs to ncm-up
it was war that dispersed everybody from the north (up, the highlands).

jd pemuce
pèm ù-ce
The war?

mb pemuce!
pèm ù-ce
The war!

jd màhmí.
Mhm.

mb n si lay, sunjata upEMU woy,
ñ sì là-ì, sùnjátà ù-pēm ù-wò-ì,
2sg know pro-i Sunjata ncm-war ncm-3sg-i
You know it, Sunjata, his war.

jd námù.
Yes.

mb nko seŋie koŋ çok,
ñ-kò sèn-ì-yé kò ñ-tók,
emph-pro scatter-cs-stat to ncm-up
It scattered them in the north.

pe seŋinin. nɔ wo nɔ, kon lɔ nɔ wɔ kɔŋɔ;
They scattered. Everyone went on that his own way.

The Mani people also started coming down.

I think it was the Mani in the past.

It was that they were there in the north, in Manden country.

they came here by settling here and there until they arrived,

The Mani keep moving on, Kakuluma

they came here by settling here and there until they arrived in Kakuluma.

To Kakulumæ?
What do they call it Kakuluma?

Yes.

Our grandfathers, it was them in the past (who gave it the name).

They were harvesting palm wine there that they drank.

That is why they said we have produced it here.

I think that the Mani people indeed drink palm wine, don’t they?

The Mani like palm wine

They do drink it. Alcohol, piassava palm wine,
Note: *n-móé* is the general word for ‘alcohol’ and by default for ‘palm wine’, but *is* also a word for the variety of ‘palm wine’ produced by the shorter piassava palm.

nPɔrnu wa ce manay,
n-pɔr n-wá cè mànà-i.
ncm-palm.wine ncm-palm def dem-i
Palm wine, that one.

**Palm wine is food**

pè le gbó mòe ma la
pè lè gbó móé mà là
pro say just palm.wine pro pro
people say it is just wine,

kerey, iyomi hiŋ, yeŋde ŋa ŋo la.
kére-i, ǐ-yóm ǐ-hín, yèndé ŋà ŋò là.
but-i ncm-ancestor ncm-1pl food 3pl pro pro
but for our grandfathers, it is their food.

háán nu inaŋ, lò n de ka pòk niŋ kaki,
háán nú ịnaŋ, lọ ọ̀ dè kà pòk nyịn kàkí,
until with? today, pro 2sg enter here land 1pl here

Up to this day, if you enter this land of ours,

mane ma pe kul.
mane ma pe kúl.
dem pro pro drink
that is what people drink.

mò ma kul n kon n kà bule,
mó mà kúl ọ́ kò-n ņ kò bule,
2sg pro drink 2sg go-mid 2sg go farm
You drink it, you’re gone, you should go to work,

mò ma kul n sọto iceni kele;
mó mà kúl ọ́ sọto ị-ceñi kele.
2sg pro drink 2sg get ncm-reflection ncm-good
you drink it to acquire perspicacity.

Npantán mu iyomi hiŋ may.
n-pànt n-mu ǐ-yóm ǐ-hín mà-i.
ncm-work ncm-with ncm-ancestor ncm-1pl pro-i
That was the work of our ancestors.

**Resuming talk of the war**
n key la ŋa huni, upemu ce kɔncɔy,
Do you see how they came? This war,

kɔ hunen muni yeleŋ.
pro come-neg stop behind
it did not come to stop behind (them).

akurugba ce naï ce ka kɔnkɔn
ncm-warrior ncm-def 3pl aux here batter
The warriors continued to batter them.

amana ce núŋ, naï mintan dən.
ncm-Mani ncm-def still 3pl fearless-neg thing
The Mani people still greatly feared them.

jd nlara maninɔ cen miŋta dən?
be.thought Mani-person aux-neg fear thing
I think so, the Mani people feared the thing.

mb naï cen miŋta nderek.
3pl aux-neg fearless ncm-custom
They were frightened by their practices.

**The Mani join up with the Baga**

The Mani people?

abaga ce wo, naï hun.
ncm-Baga ncm-def emph 3pl come
it was the the Baga people who came.

jd abaga cey
ncm-Baga ncm-def-i
The Baga people?

mb abaga ce. naï hun dakaŋan,
The Baga people, they joined up and someone said that it was the case that these warriors were intending to come down.

They pursued (them), and they (the Mani people) scattered. When they scattered, it was to Tabunsu. In Tabunsu. Whereabouts is that?

Tabunsu is close to Uröbirika (Dubreka).

The Baga move north and the Mani go south. The Baga people headed up to the north side.
As they went up to the north, they reached Koba and on up to Boké.

The Mani people also, they went down (below).

The Manis continued on until they arrived at Sangbon.

They reached Sangbon and stayed on Kabak.

Right. Instead of to Kabak a Mani person would say ‘ko Kabènk’?
mb ko kabenk. ña key, la ña hun mòe kolì,
kò kàbènk. ña ké-i, là ña hun mòe kòlì-
to Kabenk 2sg see-i pro 3pl come enter there-i
‘Ko Kabenk’. Do you see how they got there?

ña hun nyér, ña kòn ko yel bomun ce,
ña hùn nyèr, ña kò-n kò yèl bòmùn ce,
3pl come cross 3pl go-mid to island big def
They crossed over and went to the big island,

**Matakan**

nyènè kace lo yo. ña le “si hun matáñ ka”,
nyènè kà cè lò yo. ñâlé si hùn mât-án kà
dem past cop proprt, call we come hide-mid here
about which they said, “Let us come hide ourselves here”;

ko lò pe ña le ko matakan.
kò lò pè nyâlé kò-mâtàkán.
to pro pro call to-Matakan
the place that people call Matakan.

jd ko matakan
kò-mâtàkán
To Matakan?

mb ko matakan
kò-mâtàkán
To Matakan.

jd matakan ce, halí ña le “si hun matáñ ka”.
mâtàkán ce, hàli nyâlé si hùn mât-án kà.
Matakan def, for say 1pl come hide-mid here
This Matakan, because they said, “Let us come hide ourselves here”.

mb “si hun matáñ ka”.
si hùn mât-án kà.
1pl come hide-mid here
“Let us come hide ourselves here”.

jd lò pe nyâlé ko matakan.
lò pè nyâlé kò mâtàkán.
pro pro call to Matakan
That’s why they call it Matakan.
**Sunjata’s lieutenant, Kalmasine, threatens Matakan**

mba, n key kalmasineye, sofane sunjata naka bòla ce.
mbà, n kë-ì kàlmàsìnë-ì, sòfà-nò sùnyàtò ìlà kà bòlàcè.
okay 2sg see-i Kalmasine-i warrior Sunjata 3pl in past
All right, you see Kalmasine, he was one of Sunjata’s warriors in the past.

nyàlò “lò fòe ìò yomò,
nyàlè lò fòe ìò yòmò,
say pro God pro agree,
They (Sunjata’s troops) say “If God agrees,

lò-ì càp-yè ì-gbàtò kà nṣàngbòn kàkì,
pro-i start-stat ncm-cutlass in Nsangbon here
when we start (to use) the sword here in Nsangbon,

fò si kò kò tòk, ko matakan ko nyàlè”.
fò si kò kò tòk, kò màtàkàn kò nyèlè.
must we pro go wash, to Matakan to sea
we must wash them in the sea at Matakan.” (mb 5/15/05, jd 6/10/05)

**The brothers decide to leave**

yòmèkèñ tòm la pìnò wò nèràkà, nà yèl tàmìrò.
yòmkèñ fìm la pìnè i-wò nèràkà, nà yèl tàmìrò.
Yomkelen tell pro younger.brother ncm-3sg Neraka, 3pl call Tamro
Yomkelen told his younger brother Neraka, and they called Tamro (another brother).

nyàlè “sì ma cal kay, sì tun ya lò, nò hi kò nò
nyàlè sì mà cèl kà-ì, sì tòn yà lòì kònò,
say 1pl neg sit here-i, 1pl search now pro, 1pl? dem
They said “Let’s not stay here, let’s look for somewhere else to stay!

anya ce ñànày, hààn yà,
à-nyá à-cè ñànnà-ì, hàànn yà,
ncm-people ncm-def dem-i, until now,
These people, up until now,

ña tulùnù ngbòl.”
ña tùl-yè nùn n-gbòl.
3pl look.for still ncm-heart
they are still looking for (our) heart.”

jd nà hìn yèlèn tùn
nà hìn yèlèn tùn
3pl 1pl behind chase
They are pursuing us!

They are pursuing us! That which they built was their canoe.

They put their families on board.

This Forécariah River, the water was low still.

it was not yet big. They boarded.

After boarding, they arrived to this Sipkobi river,

They call it (this river) Mosote.

They call it (this river) Mosote.
How do they call it Mosote?

In the Mosote river there were many leeches.

You see how they boarded,

They entered that river in flight.

They came out at the Sanaya River.

They crossed to the bank at Konoban.

It was there he Mani people came to stay.

In Konoban? There they came to sit down.
They lived there for many years!

When they were there, they were going out to fish with hooks.

They used to gaze at the forest in Samu.

The four brothers

Do you know that there were four of them with their families?

Yomkelen yo, Neraka yo, Nunn Tamron yo, Nunn Nembure sa.

Yomkelen prt, Neraka prt, and Tamro prt and Nembure-light-skinned.

Mh, you see how they came and stayed there,

They said, “This place is where we are,

Families cross the Forécariah

They can be seen over there on the other side,
okay, lpl try lpl arrive pro. lpl go there now (and) look
All right, let’s try to get there. Let us go now and take a look.”

ηα ηα hun pelan, ubor ηα pe bulẹn.
ηο ηα hún pèlòn, ù-bọr ηα pè bùlẹn.
pro 3pl come board, ncm-family 3pl again? all
Then they boarded, the whole family.

yeli pum nye loy, pe nye nyale, ko gbọtuko.
yél ì-pòm nyè lọ-ì, pé nyè nyàlà, kò gbọtúkọ.
forest? ncm-some pro pro pro call to Gbotuko
There is another forest, they call Gbotuko.

amana ce ηα ley ko gbọtuko.
à-màn à-cé nàlè-ì kò gbọtúkọ.
cnm-Mani ncm-def call-i to Gbotuko
The Mani people call it ‘ko Gbotuko’.

**A mangrove punctures the canoe (patched w/ snail shells)**
nlọ utu ce, ηα hun cu, wóm cè kol.
n-ìlà ì-cù cè, kò hún cù, wóm cè kọl.
emph-pro ncm-mangrove def, pro come pierce boat def there
There a mangrove tree made a hole in the boat.

wóm icamat isuki ce wọnà ki.
wóm ì-càmàt ì-sùk ì-cè wònà ki.
boat ncm-broken.shells ncm-snail def dem here
This canoe was made out of snail shells.

bọlọ ηα tań ko yeli ce, ηọnọ ηα mɔe pe ko loy.
bólọ nà tǎń kò yél ì-cè, nọnọ nà mó pè kò lò-ì.
and 3pl cross to forest ncm-def, dem 3pl enter again to pro-i
And they crossed over to the forest, when they arrived there.

ηα mar pe kol loy, ηα de lọ kol.
ηα màr pè kọl lọ-ì, ηα dé lọkọl.
3pl like again there pro-i 3pl stay dem
They liked it there, and they stayed there.

hali n kọ inàñ, mọ lọ bọnt ẹkintọ ce.
hài n kọ ẹnàn, mó lọ bọnt ì-kíntọ (ì-)cé.
for 2sg go today, 2sg pro meet ncm-ruin (ncm-)def
Even if you go now, you will find ruins there.

ηα bèmpa pe icamat isuki cilàŋ.
ηα bèmpá pè ì-càmàt ì-sùk ì-cílàn.
They prepared some more broken shells of snails,

They fixed (the canoe), they plastered (it) onto their canoe, and then they burned it (held it over the fire so that it would harden).

Thus pro pro prepare water.container ncm-def prt like how they repair the water coolers.

They continued on until they crossed to the Samu side.

They landed at Tikike. It seems the place where the people dock.
The Mani people, there they first landed their boat.

After they landed their canoe there, they then went up.

They looked for a place, a place to stay.

Reunion at Caton

Then they walked until they came to see Katon.

When they came together there, Neraka left.

This Neraka seems to walk a lot!

Neraka left. He was a hunter.

Was he a hunter?
He was a hunter.

Tamro was also a hunter.

Yomkeleng was their elder (the oldest)

Everyone goes and looks for a place to stay.

You have seen how Neraka left.

He came to the village of Kabendo

Some slept in Karota

and then he crossed there. He crossed to Karota.

N’kompan and the mudskippers

He came to the village of Kabendo

and passed on through.

Some slept in Karota

and then he crossed there. He crossed to Karota.
and 3sg pass to Ngbempanj
and continues on to Ngbempang.

nlọ pe ọnale a ko nkọmpa
ń-lo pè nyàlè à kò ñkònpán
emph-pro pro call that to N’kompan
which they (now) call “N’kompan”.

jd ko Ngbempanj, a ọ na ọ na ọnale ko nkọmpa
kò Ngbempanj, à-ńà lọ ọ na nyàlè kó ñkòmpán
to Ngbempang. ncm-3pl pro 3pl call to N’kompan
To Ngbempang, who is it that calls it “N’kompan”?

mb ah, asos acey, aman ace
áh a-sòsò à-ce-í à-mànì à-cé
interj ncm-Soso ncm-def-i ncm-Mani ncm-def
Ah, the Soso and the Mani

pele gbo wom ko nkọmpa
pèrè gbo wom kò ñkòmpán
also just all.together to N’kompan
also all together (came) to N’kompon

si ka kondi pań ibot ka ki
sǐ ká kò-n-dì pàn ṣ-bót kàkì
1pl past go-mid-cmp fish mudskipper here
We went fishing for mudskippers here.
Town name literally means ‘have caught mudskippers here’.

n si la aman ace, ọ na kace yoy,
nn sì là à-mànì à-cé ọná ká cè yó-í
2sg know pro ncm-Mani ncm-def 3pl past ipf eat
You know that the Mani used to eat

ibot icey ọ na mań ya.
ṣ-bót ṣ-cè ọná ká màr ọnà-í
ncm-mudskipper ncm-def 3pl past love 3pl
mudskipper, they used to love them.

**Kigbali and the plum tree**
awa, bólo u mọe ko gbál ało,
áwà bólo ụ mọi kò gbál àlọ
okay and.then 3sg arrive to plum.tree under
Okay, next he arrived under the plum tree.

bólo u yok lọ bel kol.
bôlô ù yôk lô bèl kôl
and 3sg build pro hut there
and built a temporary shelter there.

ŋo nwis nce ŋa lô ce fo yôy,
ŋô ŋ-wîs ŋ-cé ŋâ lô cê fo yô
pro ncm-animal ncm-def 3pl there aux emerge prt
Because game was plentiful there,

u yok lô bel pômô kol.
ù yôk lô bèl pômô kôl
3sg build pro hut small there
he built a small hut there.

kôl lô ŋ cê sôtê ŋ-wîs ŋ-cé kô gbôl âlô
there pro 3sg aux await ncm-animal ncm-def to plum.tree under
There he was awaiting his prey under the plum tree.

neraka wô bi lô.
nerâkâ wô ï lí lô
Neraka 3sg have there
Neraka lived there.

haan ya imamadi wô ŋa loy.
hàáán ŋà ì-màmàdî wô ŋà lô-ì
until 3pl ncm-descendants 3sg 3pl there-i
and still his descendants do.

nenkuman ca ò wô kace yè.
nénkûmàn cà wô wô kà cê yè
Nenkuman son 3sg 3sg past cop prt
Nenkuman was his son. (lit. Nenkuman his son he was.)

kumà ñ ç ò nenkoromboy,
nènkûmàn cà wô-ì nènkôrômbô-ì
Nenkuman son 3sg-i Nenkorombo-i
Nenkuman’s son was Nenkorombo.

ñà-n bulenyi, ko i gbâl bul ce kôñô lô pe kom ñà.
ñà-n bulêni-kô ì-gbâl bul cê kôñô lô pê kom ñà
3pl-emph all to plum.tree one def dem pro pro bear 3pl
they were all born in this one Ko-igbal.

awa, ñane bônsô ñà ñç de ko i gbâl inàñ.
àwà ñàñè bônsô ñà ñç dé kô-ì-gbâl ìnàñ
okay dem clan 3pl pro stay to-ncm-plum.tree today
Okay, those their clan stays today in Kigbali.

Those, they say are the natives, the clan of Neraka.

Yomkeleng then 3sg stay to plum.tree and 3sg stay in Caton

Tamro left, he went down to Titike

He crossed over to the town which was there,

A stream was there to cross to Kakut

and he also crossed there. He also went to hunt there.

ηνανω πελ γ'αυ, μάκε νδαι νρα νεγεν,
ηνων πελ γαυ μάκε η-νδαι η-να η-νεγεν
when hunt prt ord ncm-day ncm-three ncm-def
When hunting after three days

ndik nce ma gben wo yeti.

ŋ-dik ñ-cé mà gbén wɔ yɛtì
ncm-hunger ncm-def pro finish 3sg grab
hunger finished (really) seized him.

ŋo pok ce wɔ nyɛr ka gbɛntì kà lèl yò,
ŋɔ pɔŋ cɛ wɔ nyɛr kà gbɛntì kà lèl yò
pro hippo def 3sg cross in Benty in side prt
as the hippo was crossing to the other side where Benty is,

pɔŋ ce pɔŋ hundi.
pɔŋ cɛ pɔŋnùn-dì
hippo def dive-cmp
the hippo dove.

upɔŋ ce iwis wɔ la,
ù-pɔŋ cɛ ì-wís wɔ là
ncm-hippo def ncm-animal 3sg pro
The hippo is the animal

ŋo asosa ce nà le mali yò.
ŋɔ à-sosɔ à-cé nàlɛ mali yò
pro ncm-Soso ncm-def say “mali” prt
that ncm.Soso ncm-def call Mali prt
that the Soso call “mali”.

ŋà kace ka sal ce kɔnɔ.
ŋà kà cɛ kà sàl cɛ kɔnɔ
3pl past cop in river def dem
They were in that river.

wɔm perɛ̀ bɔlɔ pɔŋ hun u bìl u lɔm wɔ.
wɔ-n pɛrɛ̀ bɔlɔ pɔŋ-ùn u bìl ù-lɔm wɔ
3sg-emph also and dive-mid 3sg grab ncm-tail 3sg
He also dove and grabbed on to its tail.

ŋà sem ko ce bɔlɔ u mɛl wɔ,
ŋà sɛm kɔ cɛ bɔlɔ ù mɛl wɔ
3pl stand to land and 3sg release 3sg
They stood on land and he let it go.

ba, iwis woyɛn wɔ la.
ba ì-wís wɔyɛn wɔ là
because ncm-animal scary 3sg pro
because the animal is frightening

It was the one (gun) they called “konkonyi”.

The Mani call “ubomunyer”, it is “ubomunyer”.

He took it to the stone that was in Benty.

Note: This stone can still be identified, now under an apple tree just past a medical clinic on the way to the Benty market.

but the hunger was finishing him off.

Our ancestors were clever people, they were.

When Yomkeleng came to see, it was the case that he didn’t see his younger brother.

and he also appeared in a supernatural way (lit. ‘in his manhood’ despite being miles away)
There he came and found him sitting on the stone.

He said, “Hey, dear Tamro, what is up?

You were gone yesterday and gone the day before!

Even today we haven’t yet seen you.

He said, “Older brother, the situation is that I arrived here,”

He said, “But hunger is finishing me off.

Hunger has really grabbed me.”

He said, “Right, you didn’t bring anything along yesterday?”

Hunger has really grabbed me.”

He said, “Right, you didn’t bring anything along yesterday?”

Hunger has really grabbed me.”

Hunger has really grabbed me.”
and pro set pro ncm-name to Gbenti
And so, people gave the place the name of “ko-gbenti”.

lo pe mo lo koy n gbens yoku mun.
lɔpè mó lɔ kò-i ɔ n gbɛ̃ ɔk ì mʊn
when 2sg pro go-i 2sg finish carry 3sg return
If you go there, you really should bring something when you return.

fɔ n gbɛn yoku mun.
fɔ ɔ n gbɛn ɔk ì mʊn
must 2sg finish carry 3sg return
It is necessary that you bring something when you return.”

The search for a home continues
awa, n key, bolɔ ha hun de, la ha hun dey,
áwɔ ɔ n kɛ-ì bɔlɔ ɔ hùn ðe, là ò hùn ðe
okay, 2sg see-i, then 3pl come enter, pro 3pl come enter
All right, you see, then they returned, it was at the time they returned.

la yelendi nembure sa pere,
là yɛlɛn-dì nɛmbùrɛsà pɛrɛ
pro behind-cmp Nemburesa also
It was afterwards Nemburesa also (departed on the quest for a home).

u fondi perey ɔ kɔ pere tun ayeni,
ù fɔn-dì pɛrɛ-ì wɔ kɔ pɛrɛ tûn ðɛy
3sg go.out-mid-cmp also-i 3sg go also search middle
He departed also he went also to look for a place

nlo pe pere ñale ka ko mi lɔ ki ɔ.
ñ-lɔpè pɛrɛ nỳàlɛkàkɔ mi lɔ ki ɔ
emph-where also call home 1sg pro here rel
that he could call his home here.

The sacrifice held without Neraka – he departs in a huff
tamrɔ yo, neraka yo, yomkelen yo,
tàmrɔ yò nèràkà yò yomkelen yò
Tamro prt.emph Neraka prt.emph Yomkelen prt.emph
Tamro-o, Neraka-o, Yomkalen-o

ha hun fok satka, satka mani dice ðɔ ðe.
ŋà hùn fòk sàktà, sàktà mànì dì-cè ðò yè
3pl come take.out sacrifice, sacrifice Mani ncm-def proprt
They came to offer a sacrifice – it was a sacrifice in the Mani way.

satka manidi ce ðɔney, sa ma nu nembure fɔi,
That Mani sacrifice was held before Nembure arrived.

They finished celebrating that sacrifice.

He said, “Eh, elder brothers, you have already celebrated that sacrifice?”

For this sacrifice, three stones are used.

In the Mani way, one stone in Caton,

and another in Mounkourou, and the last one was in Ndikipal.

“All right. Brothers, the way you have offered the sacrifice being that I had left you,

because you know that it is we do not come from one mother,
It is in the future that those coming together with you should form one clan.

As for me, I am your (pl) stranger, you have finished making the sacrifice.”

**Neraka back to their original home on Kabak**

He continued, “All right, as for me, I return to where we came from.”

Then he returned to Kabak.

He left and went to build in Yilayen, he was ahead (of the others in starting a town).

It was also the first town in Kabak.
but Mani ncm-def when pro finish multiply prt
Because the Mani have really grown in number,

hi le ya mani
hí lè yá màñí
1pl say 1sg Mani
we say “I am Mani”.

**The establishment of clans**

bônsò nèrâkà, nà calà ko ìgбал;
bônsò nèrâkà nà câl-á kò-ìgbâl
clan Neraka 3pl sit-fv to-Kigbâl
Neraka's offspring, they stayed in Kigbali;

bônsò nèrâkà, nà bì ko ìpolòn;
bônsò nèrâkà nà bì kò ìpolòn
offspring Neraka they live in ncm-kapok (Ipolon)
Neraka's offspring, they lived in Ipolon;

bônsò nèrâkà, nà bì ko salatuk.
bônsò nèrâkà nà bì kò sàlâtúk
clan Neraka they live in Salatuk
Neraka's clan, they lived in Salatuk (Salatougou).

bônsò nèrâkà, nà bì haan ko mòkumàñ.
bônsò nèrâkà nà bì haân kò mòkùmàñ
clan Neraka 3pl have way to Mokuman
Neraka's clan, they lived all the way to Mokuman.

nenkumàñ bônsò wò nò kò n kâl.
nènkùmàñ bônsò wò nò kò n kâl
nenkumàñ clan 3sg pro go-mid there
As to Nenkumañ, his offspring (also) went there.

tàmrò, bônsò wò nò bì ko gbèntí.
tàmrò bônsò wò nò bì kò gbèntí
Tamro clan 3sg pro have to Benty
Tamro, his clan lived in Benty.

nwò kom nènyèmí. nènyèmí, tàmrò wò kom wò.
nwò kom nènyèmí nènyèmí tàmrò wò kom wò
emph-3sg give.birth Nenyemí Nenyemí, Tamro 3sg give.birth 3sg
He produced Nenyemí, Nenyemí, Tamro gave birth to him.

ansu gbèntí, tàmrò wò kom wò.
ansu gbèntí tamró wò kom wò
Ansu Gbenti Tamrc 3sg give birth him
Tamrc is Ansu Gbenti's father.

**Ansu Gbenti brings French in 1874**

n wo deke apot ace ka ki.
ñ-wò dékè à-pòt à-cé kàkì
emph-he put.in ncm-White ncm-def here
He (Ansu Gbenti) brought the white people here.

u deke apota ce ka samu, ka gbenti kay, 1874.
ù dèkè à-pòt à-cé kà sàmù kà gbèntì ñà kà 1874
he put ncm-White ncm-def in Samu in Benty in 1874
He brought the white people here to Samu, here in Benty, in 1874.

ŋope yiriè ka gbenti ka ki, 1874.
ŋò pè yirì-yè kà gbèntì kàkì 1874
pro pro open-stat in Benty here (in) 1874
This opened Benty, in 1874.

lò n kò, upolẹ́ pum, kò lò y kò gbenti kò pecuy,
lò ñ kò ù-pòlòù pùm kò lò kò gbèntì kò pècù
if 2sg go! ncm-kapok some pro be to Benty to wharf
If you go, there is a cotton tree, at the wharf there in Benty,

ŋò ke pe gbál alòy 1874,
ŋò ké pè gbá! álò 1874
pro see pro write under 1874
you'll see that someone wrote '1874',

ŋo apot ace ña hun ka ki.
ŋò à-pòt à-cé ñà hún kàkì
when ncm-White ncm-def 3pl come here
when the Whites came here.

jd urọŋ kọ la.
ù-rọŋ kọ là
cnm-truth pro pro
It's true.

**Fight over chieftancy between Nenyemi and Ansu Gbenti**

mb n toe lay kere samanụ ña de kay,
ũ tōe là kɛrɛ́ sàmàndù ñà dɛ̂ kà
you hear pro but before 3pl enter here
Did you understand? But before they entered here,

nenyemi wọ yema bedi ka samu.
Nenyemi wanted to be the chief here in Samu,

because his grandfathers used to be chiefs.

At that time, the Mani people had settled here.

They had grown in number. When Nenyemi came to settle here,

His younger brother came, but for him,

They were used to one another.

They knew each other well, the white people, indeed!?
The white people came and asked him,

ʻpe! kena, mɔn!
pé kénà mɔ-n
interj friend 1sg-emph

“Hey, my friend!

mɔnɔ marka mpinkin be ka samu ɔ;
mɔ-n ŋ märkâ ŋ pínkù bë ka sàmù wɔ
you-emph 2sg supposed.to 2sg become chief in Samu prt
You are supposed to become the chief of Samu;

tara mɔ, wɔ mɔ ka be dice?
târà mɔ wɔ mɔ kà bè di-cë
older.brother 2sg 3sg 2sg give chieftancy ncm-def
your elder brother, you will give him the chieftaincy?”

jd ansu gbenti we?
ânsù gbeñë wë
Ansu Gbenti prt
Was that Ansu Ggbenti?

mb ansu gbenti we. tegensenya ce ɳone ɳo de ɳa ayeñ,
ânsù gbeñë wë. têgënsënyà çë ɳòñë ɳò ðë ɳa ñëyë
Ansu Gbenti prt. misunderstanding? def dem pro enter them middle
That was Ansu Gbenti. That misunderstanding came between them,

bọlo nenyemi fok lọn. u kọn u kọ cal ko nbokul.
bọlọ nènyèmì fòk lọ-n ù kọ-n ù kọ càl kò ngbòkúl
and Nenyemi go.out pro-emph 3sg go-mid 3sg go sit to Ngbokul
so nenyemi left. He went and settled in Ngbokul.

n hun woŋ dem nèraka ko pamalapi,
ň hùn wòm dém nèràkà kò pàmdlàp
emph come together chase Nèraka to Pamalap
Then he chased Nèraka to Pamalap,

lɔ kɔ kɔmɔ yek kol, be sebra yek.
lɔ ù kọ kómɔ-ɔ yék kòl, bë sèbràyék
where 3sg go give.birth-ev Yek there chief Sebrayek
where he had Yek, Ba Sebra-Yek.

kere manidi cey, u fok ka haan u kɔn ko rɔkɔn,
kèrè màñì di-cë ù fòk kà hààn ù kọ-n kò rɔkɔn
but Mani ncm-def 3sg leave here way.up.to 3sg go-mid to Rɔkɔn
Furthermore, the Mani people spread from here way up to Rɔkɔn,
He left here on to Yeliboya, then on to Rokon,

haan pe hun peri ka ki.
until pro come pour here
on to where they come together.

One chief is what we knew, all of us, the Mani here in the Samu.

That palaver continued until

the Whites came to ask to come among us.

The English claim part of the Samu

The English people took one side (of the Samu),

the French took the other.

The people in the English area started calling it

'English Samu',

'English Samu',
The many travels of the Mani

If you (pl) come to ask me about the Mani people,

we the Manis have travelled for a long time!

these who went up, they also came by road,

they came here in numbers and spread to this Benn here, and on to Kununkaŋ,

Kununkang

To Kununkan. This Kununkan, it is to Waliya.

It belongs to the Mani people.

la manino fó ya ko kununkaŋ
là mání-nò fó yà kò kùnúnkàn
What do the Manis call Kununkan?

To Kununkan, all right, it is there?

It's a mountain. There are many cola trees there,

They say, “You have not been here yet, we have not been here yet”,

(Mani) The Soso people called it ‘KununkaN’. “We have not been here”.

They came here walking,

They followed each other until we became numerous here in Samu.

Why the Mani flee (the Soso)

They came here walking,
The Mani people are refugees.

ŋa mintan upem, akimo ŋa la.
ŋà mɪntà-èn ụ-pèm à-kìmò ŋà là they be fearless-neg ncm-war ncm-refugee 3pl pro
They fear war, they are refugees.

jd ŋa mintan nfọ!
ŋà mɪntà-èn ñ-fọ 3pl be fearless-neg ncm-palaver
They are afraid of palaver!

mb màninò cen yema nfọ,
mànì-nò cè-èn yèmà ñ-fọ
Mani-ncm aux-neg want ncm-palaver
The Mani doesn't want palaver,

u cen yema kọntefili,
ù cè-èn yèmà kọntefili
3sg aux-neg want trouble
he doesn't like trouble,

nụn bọèn mafixe, anụn asosa ce ụnàa ki.
nűn boèn màfìxè à-nụn à-sòsò à-cé ụnàà ki and problem (So) ncm-with ncm-Soso ncm-def these here
or disappointment, between them and these Soso people.

cọl ayèn ŋa ce ŋọ ọnọ ce caŋ ki,
cọl ayèn ŋa ce ŋọ ọ̀́ gbó cè càn ki night middle 3pl def! pro just aux pass here
In the middle of the night it is they who pass by here,

ŋa de tèŋk sọŋkọ hali ụnụ umuk.
ŋà dè tèn kòn kòù hàli bàn ù-mùk they start raise shout for hit forehead
they start shouting, to go and pray (bang foreheads).

lane la ka nekindi aman ace.
lànè là kà nèkí-n-dí à-màni à-cé
dem pro here annoy-mid-cmp ncm-Mani ncm-def
That annoyed the Mani people.

áwa, kere inaŋ, si kondi hun mọ̀̀ nàa ka sambékàk.
áwa kêrè ịnàa ọkọ ọkọ hùn mọ̀̀ kà sàmbèkàk
okay but today 1pl go-mid-cmp come arrive here very.end?
All right, but nowadays, we have arrived at the very end.
ka ki lo pe n'a le kasambekak.
kăkî lô pè nyâlê kà-sâmbèkôk
here pro pro call in-very.end
This is the place that they call "the very end".

jd ka sambekàk lô ki, nnye
kâ sâmbèkôk lôkî ñnyé
here very end dem isn’t it
This is the very end, right?

mb ka sambekàk lô ki.
kâ sâmbèkôk lôkî
in very.end dem
This is the very end.

‘We stop here’

jd nla ra ko mu nkun.
ñîlărà kô mûnkûn
thought to stop
So we stopped here.

mb ka mu nkun, ka sa mu nkun.
kâ mûnkûn kà, sî-mûnkûn
here stop here 1pl-stop
We stop here, in 'Samunkun'.

la pe nàle ka sa mu ŋ.
là pè nyâlê kà-sâmùŋ
pro pro call ncm-Samu
This is why they call it “Samu”.

pe lô n fôk kô ka, lô mo kôna,
pè lô ŋ fôkô kà lô mó kò-n yà
interj if 2sg leave here where 2sg go-mid q
If you leave from here, Where will you go?

fô n pôŋun wôŋ ko nyêle.
fô ŋ pôŋ-ûn wôm kô nyèl-ê
unless 2sg dive-mid now to sea-in
Unless you dive into the sea.

le biyên fere.
lè bî-èn fèrè
must have-neg way
There is no other possibility.
The Mani culture that you see here it will disappear.

These same Soso people here, they are always following us.

I think, these people here, they are persistent.

Nowadays the Mani people marry the Soso people.

The Soso people marry the Mani people.

The Mani (mother) doesn't her infant that he should “n kul!” ('drink!' in Mani).

They are very stubborn.

Nowadays they only say “xiŋe miŋ!” ('breast-feed!' in Soso). “xiŋe miŋ!”.

They are very stubborn.
They won't say “n kul!”.

They won't say “n kul!”.

Okay, this brings about the disappearance of the Mani.

If you come ask me about the Mani,

If you come ask me about the Mani,

This is what I know about it.

This is what I know about it.

Our grandfathers came down here.

Our grandfathers came down here.

It is not our place here, it was not here.

Everyone where you get the heart to lie down (tranquility) there you go.

Early movements of the Mani, founding of culture on Kabak

Our grandfathers came down here.

Our grandfathers came down here.
They left from Coyah, they went to Manéa,

They left from Coyah, they went to Manéa,

u hun ko kimánborómò̀rə̀báyá, n mœ ko nsàngboŋ,
3sg come to Kimanboromorbaya 3pl arrive to Nsangbon
they went to Kimanboromorbaya, they arrived to Nsangbon,

n mœ ko keka, n mœ ko karàngbalì,
3pl arrive to Keka 3pl arrive to Karangbali
they arrived to Keka, they reached Karangbali,

haan n hun sɔtɔ ko kabak.
until 3pl come get to Kabak
until they got to Kabak.

Mani dice nlo le ko cəpək kol.
Mani ncm-def emph-pro pro go start there
The Mani culture started there.

Our ancestorss began to settle there in Kabak,

u matakan ce kɔnɛ,
ncm-Matakan def that
that Matakan.

Lo nà kini, nà hunun ka ki.
there 3pl escape-i 3pl come now here
there they escaped, they came (eventually to come) here.

**Morlaye Boyo’s ancestry, a descendant of Yomkelen**

yan a mɔ la fɔm ki ɔy,
1sg-emph 1sg 2sg pro inform here prt
I, who told you this,

ya le umamadi yomkelen.
1sg cop ncm-grandchild Yomkelen
I am a grandson of Yomkelen.
yomkelen, la wo sirao ko katon,
yómkêlên lá wò širàò kò kàtôn
Yomkelen wife 3sg Sirao from Katon
Yomkelen's wife Sirao from Katon,

n wo kom kakayo.
ñ-wò kóm kakàyò emph-3sg give.birth Kakayo
she gave birth to Kakayo.

kakayo, n wo pe boya kadipalatuk ko nembure.
kàkàyò ñ-wò pè bòyà kà dìpàlàòk kò nèmbùrè
Kakayo emph-3sg pro give-for-marriage in Palatougou to Nembure
Kakayo was given to marriage to Nembure in Palatougou.

kakayo ce wonie wani wo nsey,
kàkàyò cè wòñè wàn wò ñsè-i
Kakayo def dem daughter 3sg first-i
That Kakayo is her first daughter

wo kom yaŋ yomi ya wo, mama bòŋkì.
wò kóm yà-n yòm ì-yà wò màmà bòŋkì
3sg give.birth 1sg-emph grandfather ncm-mother 3sg Mama Bonki
She gave birth to my grandfather's mother, Mama Bonki.

mama bòŋkì ce wonie, wo kom soriba.
màmà bòŋkì cè wòñè wò kóm sòrìbà
Mama Bonki def dem 3sg give.birth Soriba
That Mama Bonki gave birth to Soriba.

soriba ce wonie, wo kom sana.
sòrìbà cè wòñè wò kóm sànà
Soriba def dem 3sg give.birth Sana
That Soriba had Sana.

sana ce wonie, wo kom yaŋ.
sànà cè wòñè wò kóm yà-ŋ
Sana def dem 3sg give.birth me-emph
That Sana gave birth to me.

yan a mo fàm ki òy, ya si bònsò mi, ò yò fo koy.
yà-ñ á mò fòm kì ò yà sì bònsò mì òò òò fòkò-i
I-emph I 2sg talk here prt 1sg know lineage 1sg how pro come.from-i
I, who am talking to you, I know the origin of my lineage.

upoloŋ ce ko mo ke ko matakanŋ ko pecuie òy,
The cottonwood that you see at the wharf in Matakan,

The Mani people planted it.

From there they came to Samu.

Yomkelen planted it (with) his wife Sirao.

All right, there’s one thing I want to ask you about.

The Mani people, when they fled and arrived here,

didn't they cross (over) to the place they call 'English',

they didn't go far away, did they?

The Mani clan

they go-mid until to until ncm-river to Yurka
went on, on to the Yurka River.

**The Bolom**

\[
\text{jd nimb pe na le kobolom yo.} \\
\text{n-In pè nyàlé kò-bòlòm yò emph-pro pro call to-Bolom prt} \\
\text{There, they call it Bolom.}
\]

\[
\text{mb kobolom yo.} \\
\text{kò-bòlòm yò to-Bolom prt} \\
\text{Bolom.}
\]

\[
n tièn le pe nya le bay sebra pa yomi? \\
\text{you hear-neg cop pro call Bai Sebra Pa Yom-i} \\
\text{Didn't you hear that they call Bai Sebra 'Pa Yom'? ("Bai" is a SL title (from Temne?)}
\]

\[
bay sebra pa yom, maninò wò la. \\
bái sèbrà pà yóm màní-nò wò là \\
Bai Sebra Pa Yom Mani-ncm pro pro \\
Bai Sebra Pa Yom, he is a Mani.
\]

\[
lò n te le yom, maninò wò la. \\
lò n te lè yóm màní-nò wò là \\
If 2sg hear cop Yom Mani-ncm pro be \\
If you hear anybody called Yom, he is a Mani.
\]

\[
ubolom cè bulèn aman acè ñà ka cal lò. \\
ù-bòlòm cè búlèn à-mànì à-cè ñà kà cál yò \\
ncm-Bolom def all ncm-Mani ncm-def 3pl past sit prt \\
All of Bolom the Mani once occupied.
\]

\[
n tièn le pe nàle kokamem. \\
n tiè-èn lè pè nàlé kò-kamem \\
you hear-neg cop pro call ncm-Kamem \\
Haven't you heard that the place they call Kamem?
\]

\[
ukamem cè kòne, aman acè ñà ka bi lò. \\
ù-kàmèm cè kònè à-mànì à-cè ñà kà bi lò \\
ncm-Kamem def dem ncm-Mani ncm-def 3pl past have pro \\
That Kamem once belonged to the Mani people.
\]

**Importance of drink, farming, and not lying**

\[
\text{jd kère ñò yomino ñana ñà ka hun ki o,} \\
\text{kèrè ñò yóm hín o ñànà ñà kà hun kí yò}
\]
but pro ancestor 1pl ? dem 3pl past come here prt
But when those our ancestors came,

gbet gbet yɔ, mpantn ce ŋan la ŋan ma ka si a
gbé-t-gbét yɔ̀ n-pánt n-cé ŋà-n là ŋà-n mà ká sì yà
just-redup prt ncm-work ncm-def 3pl-emph pro 3pl-emph pro past know q
really-really, what was the work that they knew?

ma ka timen a
mà ká ŋimèn yà
pro past bring.with q
and brought with them?

mb yomi hin ŋa ka biyen mpant o mpant
yöm 'i-hin ŋà kà bi-èn n-pánt-ò-ŋà
ancestor ncm-1pl 3pl past have-neg ncm-work-dist-ncm-work
Our grandfathers were having no work

fɔ buɔ ŋa num kul ŋa.
fɔ buɔl ŋà nün kul ŋa
must farming 3pl and drink 3pl
but their farming and drinking.

ŋa cen ʃɔm nin mbol.
ŋa cè-èn ʃɔm nìn ʃ-bɔl
they aux-neg tell recip ncm-lie
They never tell each other lies.

jd nla ra maninɔ cen ʃɔm nɔk ŋa mbol.
ŋlàrɔ mání-nɔ cè-èn ʃɔm nɔk ŋà ʃ-bɔl
think Mani-ncm aux-neg tell friend 3pl ncm-lie
I think that the Mani doesn't tell lies to his friend.

mb mání-nɔ cè-èn ʃɔm nɔk ŋà ʃ-bɔl.
Mani-ncm aux-neg tell friend their ncm-lie
the Mani doesn't tell lies to his friend.

mpant ŋa ŋa sɔtɔ uyo ŋay anuŋ kul ŋa.
ŋ-pánt ŋ-ŋà ŋà sɔtɔ ü-yò ŋà ənùn kúl ŋà
ncm-work ncm-3pl 3pl obtain ncm-eat 3pl and drink 3pl
their work provides them with their food and drink.

ŋa bar mpor nce mane ma ŋa kul.
ŋá bàr ŋ-pɔr ŋ-cé mànè mà ŋá kúl
3pl collect ncm-palm.wine ncm-def dem pro 3pl drink
They collect that palm wine that they drink.
What they say to each other here,

Whatever they agree on, even if you go to Conakry,

If you are asking him tomorrow it will be what they had agreed on.

Rant against Soso, ‘the stubborn people’

These stubborn people who have completely mixed with us,
mb  itontibile. sono.
  1-tônîbûlè  sônô
ncm-stubborn  palm.kernel
Stubborn. A palm kernel.

jd  sono wô pe ǣale tontibile
  sônô  wô  pè  nyâlè  1-tônîbûlè
palm.kernel3sg  pro  call  ncm-stubborn
A palm kernel, they call it stubbornness?

mb  sono wô pe ṇa le tontibile.
  sônô  wô  pè  nyâlè  1-tônîbûlè
palm.kernel3sg  pro  call  ncm-stubborn
A palm kernel, they call it stubbornness.

pe  ce  nsono ncon ncon nce
pe  cè-ēn  ṅ-sônô  ṅ-côn-ń-côn  ṅ-cé
interj?  aux-neg  ncm-palm.nut  ncm-small-redup  ncm-def
Is it not the tiny palm nuts that are in the head (at the top),

ma ko cent ce ko boley
mà  kò  cènt  cé  kò  bàl-ē-i
pro  to  cluster  def  to  head-inside-i
(in)  the  cluster  at  the  top?
mb  is  referring  to  the  unripe  palm  nuts,  which  are  still  very  hard  and  inedible

atontibile  ņa  la,  cèn  amani  ņa.
à-tônîbûlè  ņà  là,  cè-ēn  à-mànî  ņà,
cnm-stubborn  pro  pro  aux-neg  ncm-Mani  pro
They  are  stubborn,  not  the  Mani.

tontibile  ce  ņane,  ņa  gben  sîni  fôle  ce.
tônîbûlè  cé  ņânè  ņà  gben  sînî  fôle  cé
stubborn  def  dem  3pl  finish  destroy  world  def
Those  hard-headed  people,  they  have  destroyed  the  (our)  world.

Summary
mba,  kàŋkà  fôe  ņo  ka  hin  sabudi  kelen.
mbà  kàŋkà  fôé  ņò  kà  hìn  sâbù  di-kèlèn
well  so.that  god  pro  give  us  favor  ncm-good
Well,  may  God  grant  us  favor.

kemalè  lo  pe  mò  mi  hun  yi,
kèmàlè  lôpè  mò  mì  hûn  yì
thus  if  2sg  me  come  ask
Thus, if you come ask me,

hali ɲa le manidi ce ŋɔ le de ka ki ɔy,  
ḥälti nyálé mànì di-će ŋɔ lè de kàkì yò-ì  
for say Mani ncm-def how pro enter here here prt  
to explain how the Mani culture entered here,

hin bulen u tol kɔy tol. cen ka ko hin ło ki.  
hìn búléñ ü tól kò-ì tòl,  
us all 3sg descend pro-i descend  
cè-èn kàkò hìn łożì  
aux-neg home 1pl dem  
All of us came down (from elsewhere). This is not our place here.

upem bul ce kɔnɔ, nko senye fɔlo ce.  
ù-pek bûl ce kɔnɔ ü-kò sẹn-yè fɔlɔ ce  
cmp-war one def dem emph-pro sow-stat world the  
This one war scattered the world.

ka ki ło fɔe ŋɔ ka hìn.  
kàkì ło fɔe ŋɔ kà hìn  
here pro God pro give 1pl  
God gave us this place.

kemalè ło pe mɔ mi hun yi, fɔ a fɔm mɔ gbo lanè.  
kèmàlè lòpè mò mì hùn yì fɔ à fɔm mò gbo lànè  
thus if 2sg me come ask must I tell 2sg just dem  
Thus, if you come ask me, this is what I must tell you, just that.

ufok ka samu mènì,  
ù-fòk kà sàmù mèn-ì  
cmp-start here Samu down-i  
Samu started down here.

lö sabatí ko matakaŋ lö haŋ fo ƙɔ, ɲa hunun ka.  
lö sàbàñi kò màtàkán lò hàáñ fɔkɔ, ɲa hùn-ùn kà  
pro settle to Matakan pro until remove 3pl come-mid here  
when they settled in Matakan until they came out here.

**Planting of cottonwoods by brothers**

opoloŋ ce kɔnɔ ko matakaŋ ko pɛcuí oy,  
ù-poloŋ ce kɔnɔ kò màtàkán kò pɛcù-e yò-ì  
cmp-cottonwood def dem to Matakan to wharf-middleprt-i  
This cottonwood in the wharf at Matakan (tɛ: still there),

yomkelerɛ wo to ƙɔ.  
yòmkèlèn wɔ tò ƙɔ
Yomkeleŋ 3sg plant pro
Yomkeleŋ planted it.

ko cur ayen neraka wo tɔ kɔ.
kɔ cùr ayɛn nɛrakɔ wɔ tɔ kɔ
in town middle Neraka 3sg plant pro
In the middle of the town, Neraka planted it.

opołeŋ kit cɛ kɔŋɔ dulɔ cɔ, lɔ pe na le ko melia cɔ,
ù-pɔlɔn kit cɛ kɔnɔ dul-u-yɔ yɔ-ɔ lɔ pé nyɔlɛ kɔ-mɛfiɔ yɔ-i
ncm-kapok short def dem fall-ev-stat prt-i pro pro call to-Melia prt-i
This short cotton tree that fell in the place they call “Melia”,

tamrɔ wo tɔ kɔ.
tamrɔ wɔ tɔ kɔ
Tamrɔ 3sg plant pro
Tamrɔ planted it.

kol lɔ kace kɔ temɔl nwisn cɛ.
kɔl lɔ ká cɛ kɔ tɛmʊl n-wis ɔ-n-cɛ
there pro (he) past aux pro shoot ncm-animal ncm-def
There he was going to shoot animals.

nlɔ gbo yɛ fɔ a fɔm mɔ lana.
n-łɔ gbo yɛ fɔ a fɔm mɔ lana
emph-pro just prt must 1sg tell 2sg dem
This is all I can tell you about it.

lope mɔ mi hun yì dena tilaŋ.
lɔpɛ mɔ mʊ hʊn yì dɛnà ŋ-łɔ-n
if 2sg me come ask thing ncm-pro-emph
If you want to ask me about any other things,

fɔ n yie mi lə gbo wɔm.
fɔ n yì-yɛ mʊ lə gbɔ wɔm
must 2sg ask-stat me pro just now
you just ask me.

nlɔ. Sali Allah Mohammad.
n-łɔ-ŋ.
emph-pro-i
This is it. Sali Allah Mohammad (‘the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him’).
jd: This Neraka seems to walk a lot!

mb: Neraka left. He was a hunter.

jd: Was he a hunter?

mb: Yes, he was, and Tamro was also a hunter. Yomkeleŋ was their elder (the oldest of the three brothers). Everyone was looking for a place to settle. You see, then, Neraka left, and came to the village of Kabendo, which he passed by. There was somewhere else called “Karota”, and he crossed there. He crossed at Karota and continued on to Ngbempang, what they now call “N’kompan”.

jd: To Ngbempang. Who are those who call it N’kompan?

mb: Ah! The Soso people, and now the Mani people also call it N’kompan, ‘we used to fish the mudskipper here’. You know that the Mani people used to eat the mudskipper, and they like it.

All right, Neraka arrived at a plum tree, and he built a hut there. Because the animals were plentiful, he built a small hut there. There he would wait for the animals, under the plum tree, and lived there. Up to this very day, his grandchildren are there. Nenkuman was his son. Even Nenkuman’s son, Nenkorombo, among the descendants they all were born at ko ɪgbal ‘at the plum tree’. Their descendants are still today there in Kigbali. They are the natives of the town, Neraka’s offspring. Yomkeleng also stayed in Kigbali and Katon.

Tamro, he went down to Titike, the river that wasn't big, and went down, crossed over to the forest that was there (on the other side), which they call Tombo. There was a stream to cross to Kakut, and he crossed there. He went there to hunt. When he was hunting, after three days, he began to be very hungry. There was a hippopotamus crossing to the Gbenti side here, (and Tamro mounted it). The hippopotamus dove. The hippopotamus was an animal that the Soso call ‘Mali’. They were now in this river. He (Tamro) dove also and held on to the hippo’s tail. As they were arriving on the other shore, he released it, because it was a dangerous animal. He had with him his long hunting rifle, which was one of those old big guns that the blacksmiths used to make. They used to call them ‘konkonyi’ [kɔŋkɔŋi] and the Mani people call ‘ubomunyer’ [ubomʊŋer], that’s it, ‘ubomunyer’. He brought it to the large stone in Gbenti, placed it against the rock, and leaned on the rock himself. But he was very hungry.
Our grandfathers in those days, they were quite clever. This Yomkeleng, Tomro’s older brother, went to look for him, but couldn’t find his younger brother, so he went to him in his supernatural way. He met Tomro sitting on the stone. He said “Eh, Tamro, my dear, how is it going? You were gone yesterday, you were gone the day before, and up until today, we hadn't seen you. You just left and completely disappeared!” Tomro replied, “My brother, I came here, but I am very hungry.” “Are you hungry?” he asked. “Yes.” Yomkeleng then asked, “You didn't bring anything when you came yesterday?” Because of these event, people have named this place ‘Gbenti’. When you go there, you have to carry something with you. You must bring something for yourself. All right, you see, then they went back, and when they came back, Nembure left to look for somewhere that he could settle.

Tamro, Neraka, Yomkeleng then offered a sacrifice, a sacrifice involving all the Mani people. When they held that sacrifice, Nembure was absent and before he showed up, they finished celebrating. When Nembure returned he said, “Eh, brothers, you have offered this sacrifice?” This sacrifice requires three stones. One is in Caton now, another is in Munkuru, and the third is in Ndikipal. “Do you understand me?” he said. “All right, brothers, because you have offered this sacrifice in my absence, because you showed me that we don't belong to the same mother, in the days to come they will continue to say that you belong to the same family, but me, they will say I am a stranger. You have finished the sacrifice, and I am returning to where we came from.” Then he went back to Kabak. He went and built a house in Yilayen, and he was ahead of them, creating the first town on Kabak. He stayed in the village of Yilayen, and there he built a full village. Nembure also started the Mani settlements on Kabak. Because the Mani have grown in number, we say “I am Mani”.

Neraka's offspring resided in Kigbali, Ipolong, and Salatuk, even all the way to Mokuman. Nenkumang's offspring also went there.

Tamro's offspring lived in Benty. He is Nenyemi's father and Ansu Gbenti's father as well. It was Ansu Gbenti, who brought the white people here to Samu, here in Benty, in 1874. This opened Benty to the outside world in 1874. If you go, there is a cottonwood tree at the wharf in Benty, where you'll see that someone wrote '1874', when the Whites came here.

jd: It's true.

mb: Did you understand? But before they fully established themselves here, Nenyemi wanted to be the chief here in Samu, since his grandfathers had been chiefs.

jd: In that time, the Mani people had settled here.

mb: The Mani people had settled and grown in number; he was very willing to become chief. When his younger brother came, because he was well-known to the Whites – they knew each other well – the Whites asked him, “You, my friend, it’s you that should be the chief of Samu. Why should you give the chieftaincy to your older brother?”
jd: Was that Ansu Ggbenti?

mb: That was Ansu Gbenti. Because of that misunderstanding that came between them, Nenyemi left. He went and stayed in Ngbokul. Then he followed Neraka to Pamalap, where he had Yek, Ba-sebra-yek. Furthermore, the Mani people spread from here up to Rokon, from here to Yeliboya, to Rokon, up to here where they come together. We only had one chief, because we are all Mani here in Samu. That misunderstanding was present when the White people entered among us.. The English occupied one area, and the French people occupied the other part of the Samu. The people in the 'English' area started calling it 'English Samu', the people in Guinea called this area 'French Samu'.

If you come to ask me about the Mani people, you should know that we have travelled for a long, long time! These who went up, those who came by land, those who came and moved here up to Benna and up to Kunungkang.

jd: To Kunungkang?

mb: To Kunungkang. This Kunungkang, it is in Waliya. It belongs to the Mani people.

jd: What do the Manis call Kunungkang?

mb: Kunungkang. All right, the Mani people don't know the proper meaning of Kunungkang. It's a mountain. There are many cola trees there planted by our grandfathers. They say, “You have not been here, we have not been here”, (The Manis) The Soso people called it “Kunjungkan’, ‘We have not been here’. The Mani people came walking, they continued on until we became numerous here in Samu. The Mani people are escapees. They fear war, they run away from it. The Mani don't like palaver, they don't like trouble, nor disappointment, to come between them and these Soso people.(For example,) Just after midnight passes, the Soso start shouting, to call people to go and pray (lit. 'bang foreheads'). That annoyed the Mani people. All right, but nowadays, we have arrived at the very end. This is the place where they call 'the very end'.

jd: This is the very end, isn't it?

mb: This is the very end.

jd: So we stopped here.

mb: We stop here, in “Samunkun”. This is why they call it “Samu”. If you leave from here, “Where will you go?” Unless you dive in the sea. There is no other way. The Mani culture that you see here is fated to disappear. These same Soso people, they are always following us.

jd: I think, these people, they are persistent.
mb: Nowadays the Mani people marry the Soso people. The Soso people marry the Mani people. The Mani doesn't tell his child “n kul!” (‘drink!’ in Mani).

jd: They are very stubborn.

mb: They are very stubborn. Nowadays they only say “[xiñe miN]!” (‘breast-feed!’ in Soso). “[xiñe miN]!”.

jd: They don't say “n kul!”.

mb: They don't say “n kul!”’. This is what brings about the disappearance of the Mani. If you come ask me about the Mani, this is what I know about it. Our grandfathers came down here. It was not our place, here. Everyone goes where he gets peace of mind. Our grandfathers came down here. They left from Koya, they went to Manea, they went to Kimangboromorobaya, they arrived to Nsanggbong, they arrived to Keke, they arrived to Karangbali, until they got to Kabak. The Mani culture started there. Our grandparents started to settle there in Kabak, in Matakang. From there they escaped to come here.

I, who am talking to you, I am a descendant of Yomkeleng. Yomkeleng 's wife Sirao from Katon, she gave birth to Kakayo. Kakayo was given to marriage in Palatugu to Nembure. That Kakayo's first daughter gave birth to my grandfather's mother, Mama Bonki. That Mama Bonki gave birth to Soriba. That Soriba had Sana. That Sana is my father. I, who am talking to you, I know the origin of my lineage. The cottonwood tree that you see at the wharf in Matakang, the Mani people planted it. From there they came to Samu. Yomkeleng planted it with his wife Sirao.

jd: All right, I want to ask you one point. The Mani people, when they escaped and arrived here, they didn't cross to the place they call 'English', they didn't go far away, did they?

mb: The ancestors of the Mani went up to the Yurka river.

jd: There, they call them Bolom.

mb: Bolom. Didn't you hear that they call Bai Sebra 'Pa Yom'? Bai Sebra Pa Yom, he is a Mani. If you hear anybody called Yom, he is a Mani. All the Bolom area was occupied by the Mani. Haven't you heard that the place they call Kamem? That Kamem belonged to the Mani people.

jd: But when those grandfathers came, what was the work that they knew and brought with them?

mb: Our grandfathers had no work but their farming and their drink. They never tell each other lies.

jd: I think that the Mani does not tell lies to his friend.
mb: The Mani does not tell lies to his friend. Their work provides them with their food and their drink. They collect that palm wine that they drink. What they say to each other here, whatever they agree on, even if you are in Conakry, there's only one god, if you ask him tomorrow it will be the same you had agreed on. But today, those “Tontibul” [tóníbùl] (‘hard-headed, stubborn, quarrelsome’) have mixed with us.

jd: Tontibul?

mb: Tontibul.

jd: iTontibul?

mb: iTontibul. The Soso.

jd: The Soso are called “iTontibul”?

mb: The Soso are called iTontibul. Is it not the small-small nuts that are at the tip of a bunch of palm nuts (that are hard)? They are Tontibul (the Soso), not the Mani. Those Soso, they have destroyed the world.

All right, may God help us. If you come ask me, about how the Mani came here, all of us came down. This is not our place. This same war scattered the world. God gave us this place. If you come ask me, this is what I can tell you. Samu exists thanks to their arrival in matakang, from there, they came here.

This cotton tree at the wharf in Matakang, Yomkeleng planted it. In the middle of the town, Neraka planted it. This short cotton tree that fell where they call Melia, Tamro planted it. There he was shooting animals.

This is all i can tell you about it. If you come ask me something else, you just ask me.

This is it. Sali Allah Mohammad (the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him).
References