Let's Speak Bolom! The First Sherbro Primer: A Graphic Introduction to the Sherbro Language of Sierra Leone

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Yi Ḟi m flocke!

A Graphic Introduction to the Sherbro language of Sierra Leone
Yi hɔ mbolomɔnɛ!

Let’s Speak Bolom!

The First Sherbro Primer:
A Graphic Introduction to the Sherbro Language of Sierra Leone.

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to Momoh Taziff “MTK” Koroma (1957-2018), Senior Lecturer in Linguistics at Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone. MTK served as Associate Principal Investigator on the Project Documenting the Sherbro Language and Culture (SLC) and many others directed by Editor and Project Leader Tucker Childs. His assistance and knowledge were essential to this project and others, as well as to many others. These include the United Nations, the British Parliament, the Sierra Leone Government, and researchers from Africa, Europe, and the United States. His family, the people who have worked with him, the SLC, the University, and the country all mourn his passing.
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Preface

This book introduces students to the writing system of Sherbro. It is the first book of its kind and we hope you find it useful.

Please let us know if you find errors or if you would like to make suggestions as to how the book can be improved.

Thank you for your support.

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Organization of the primer

The Sherbro writing system uses a number of non-English symbols that are explained in Appendix A at the end of the book. They are the standard symbols used in writing all other Sierra Leone languages (including Krio). The first obvious difference from English is that the symbols used to represent Sherbro vowels have quite different pronunciations from the letters used to represent vowel sounds in English. Other differences are relatively minor.

The book is organized as follows. After these prefatory remarks appears the text itself, which is divided into three sections and a set of appendices.

The first section, “The Sherbro alphabet” introduces the different consonant symbols used to write Sherbro. Each letter is introduced with a number of examples containing the letter. Vowels do not have their individual pages but are exemplified throughout the section. The palatal nasal [ɲ] is represented by the digraph <ny> and has no page of its own, forming part of the “N n” page. The labialvelar <gb>, occurring in such words as gbaka ‘laughter’ and gbal ‘write’, does not have its own page.

The next section, “Sherbro vocabulary”, introduces some Sherbro words organized into different categories. The categories are the family (ramde), food (yenjoo or njoɛ), things or implements (yek / nyek), numbers or counting (tɔm), time (bonk), locations (ko), clothes (kotha the), body parts (jal or njalle), animals (vis or nvise), the home (cHELi), the kitchen (boo or booe), on the sea (helekoe), weather (hɔe), and states (theknî).

The third section contains a number of greetings and a selection of proverbs.

In the last section, Appendices, you will find an explanation of the symbols used in this book (Appendix A) and a glossary of all the words used in this book (Appendix B).
Acknowledgements

The project producing this primer, officially, the Project Documenting the Sherbro Language and Culture (SLC), was an undertaking dependent on the goodwill and support of many, including the person to whom this book is dedicated, MTK, mentioned above. Without the cooperation and generosity of the Sherbro people, however, the book would not have been possible. They are the group to which the project owes its greatest debt.

The academic institution with which I was affiliated during the SLC and from whom I derived support was Fourah Bay College, the University of Sierra Leone, in Freetown. The following individuals were particularly instrumental in the project’s success.

- Professor Sahr P. Thomas Gbamanja (GCOR), Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor, Fourah Bay College.
- Prince Kenny, Chair, Modern Languages, Fourah Bay College.
- Momoh Taziff Koroma (1957-2018), Senior Lecturer, Linguistics Program, Modern Languages, Fourah Bay College.

Locally, at the research site in Shenge, extensive support was received from the Paramount Chief. Madam PC Doris Lenga-Caulker Gbabiyou II, Paramount Chief of Kagboro Chiefdom, Bonthe District, Sierra Leone. PC Madam Lenga welcomed the research team and supported them throughout their stay. Albert Yanker, the Sherbro linguist for the Chiefdom, was particularly helpful in contributing his time and energy to the project. We are also grateful to Principal Thomas Caulker, who initiated the use of this primer in the Shenge schools.
Abdulai Bendo, a Sherbro speaker and student at Fourah Bay College, did much of the hard work in collecting and translating interviews, recorded in both audio and video formats. He was helped by Jalikatu B. Kumba, an elementary school teacher in Shenge.

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Sherbro Consonants
bala / balani

Yaαε halani k. omowę

bac

Ya ko bosni.

baata

Mbas kil le charan.

ban

ban

bue

bue lue

Yaaε ni mbali mi!
C c

Nεε gbo pulae, wo chai bol wεε.

Nomaa bul wo chai ton tho ki.

Ko koŋ gbo ho, moi choŋ.

Cheni chali ho ki? nleli beŋ dε, nchal!

A mɔ choŋ. Vɛɛ choŋ mi. Poi chɛth boke pei ya jœ.

Chenl thni
D d

Ye koŋ ve n dikil panthe gbo.

Ntole, i pɔŋ huke, ihuke ŋi pene, aji.

Pe di simente.

N kache ndik?

Ya nyi ɔm wo dumoniye.

Nukump

Kil mi ŋe ɔ gbɔ dumul.

Duk

Sese duk thɔk ƙe.

Dumoni
fama

Won be ka chee fama.
Ya fama, a ra.

fai

Keefe ko fai.

fais

Wo fos kil le hel ko.

fothi

Fofo mbol

Futh

Po ko ro gbo futh, po koi panth thiban.

Bank le kon fintiani.

Ningbi be wo le ve fonwey, ve anyin ha ho.

fintiani

trithi hi le ni fakathi hi le.
Gb gb

Gbaka kėnthi igbaka

Gbala

Gbako

Gbala

Gbalek

Gbath

Gbanthani

Tamo tondë wo gbankthani kotha kathil bom.

Gbala

Gbëth

Gbët

Mgbisịnẹ?

Gboksa

Gbikan

Gbikin

Gbison

Gbos

Aa, no gbisịn, a bi nọpokan. Thumọ ọ gbos.
R r

Yi koŋ rɔki, si yi thɔŋk pɛle bellai.

N vunth tamo ƚe!
wunthi
Ny ko wunthi
pondh le za va ha
hinko poto!

woth
Woth dik iwom bom.

wom
Ny kuvi ndembe le ni
rokos le ni ny ko ma
wom!

woi
Ya wo wei.

Ya wo wapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?

wom
Yam wat wawapun?
Y y

Kase Ie wo hun ye pali bosal Ie.
Ye na ton de, na yeek bol thiææ.”

yemi
yam
yeek

Mende ma yel.
Ye mo ko yie.

Pọ na yuki, pọ na haa nyiki?
Ye thini kath ko le thok Ie.

yuki
yethini
yikitha

M ma yikitha thok Ie!”
Ngwok ma mbolomde

Sherbro Vocabulary
ram

lok  kênya  waŋ  yagbo  ba  apa

pumɔ  yem  waŋ  thatha  ajok  chanth

pumɔ  mpɛnthe  ajok

bawombawom  bawo
ntom

bul  tin  ra

6  7  8  9  10
mënbul  mëntin  mënra  mënhiol  wan

11  12
wan ni bul  wan ni tin

13: wan ni ra
14: wan ni hiol
15: wan ni mën
16: wan ni mënbul
17: wan ni mëntin
18: wan ni mënra
19: wan ni mënhiol

100
këme

1st
nonse

2nd
tin

40: kuaña tin
50: kuaña tin ni wan
60: kuaña tin ni kuaña

kuaña ni wan : 30

hioł  mën

kuaña : 20
kotha thẹ
nvise

baa

nyangbe

fan

dip
gbengben

thumce

bel

sok

yai

bom

hya

ka

ra

kolun

hul

naa
Abolom ha łe anyin ha si hothłe

**hẹlekọẹ**

bela

pamba

nọhọnthe

bind

yu

yuhọtka

pẹl

haŋka

hantha

fikthiŋ

chiẹ

po

kamanthi

pełkuku

lala

palbom

yenchẹk
Lex ni Nthaε

Greetings & Proverbs
1. Le banaε yema gbo wu, ko ye ho botho, ha gbemọ.

2. Poe-poe hoe ifon ra.

3. Bok yema fọs, ke pia wo ko kith.

4. Bom won thonthni ho cm ci ho cm pe nọ liville.

5. Nọ wo tuε bo ha won pọllen.


7. Tokẹ pe nọ gbo ni bẹlẹ wo ye chẹn.

8. Pinkie thibole toke thiben bo ko.

9. Wo thok pọthiẹ họn velenẹ, ni le họn kuneẹ ibẹth.
10. Mpohɔ thumɔi pak, ni bi ha nyathi gbimde hom thibεŋ.

11. Vis lom vil che pen hakla.

12. Su bul ko chen leŋ ila.

13. Ha piɛε koŋ nyæ, labi wo chaŋ lan putulɛ atokoε


15. Nchala mi thibεŋe hɔɛ yan bol lɔ tun.

16. Sani pe mεn.

17. To chen duk gbal alɔ.

18. Fɔɔs gbo minde, hoɛ ho hik imam.

19. Nke gbo no bom wo gbikini ɔeɛ sɛkile, le yen che won gbo thoï, ke wo thoï yen.
20. No chen som gbeŋ Kra ka ndap.

21. Thumoe muyu wc som pak joc.

22. Thoth thiyen bul tha chal kani.

23. Pomde ho pehil kulunde, hon ho wc bolie.

24. Kulun thi chen keni binhthi kune.

25. Le weie gbo len, len la mo wei.


27. Ko lo yenjo kelende ho ma simenjemde, ni kunde ho duth.


29. Ken ko dini phanumeric.
30. Dkul gbo mėndė, ke ma ma lėli.

31. Wo tu, ke wo yiktha ite.

32. Limani lo chanj ipumanj.

33. No chen binthma thigbikan ni rikisi.

34. Thok bom gbi ko bi banj.

35. Gbani ko chendė he hal.

36. Kẹr bin mo gbo, ẹke gbo sakie mo gbikni.

37. Ma theke no ṣgbute, theke wone wo ka wo seè.

38. A ma mo saja, ni nyie mi ye drie mo thiholla?


40. Nkuai ẹkelen ma chen vei gbuluai.
41. Nson ma thumɔi ma wɔ gbo le kune.

42. Kel nakaɛ ni mango puthulle.

43. Sɔk la gbɛm chen peŋ lijem.

44. Pia sɛkil ho chen nyathini.

45. Lom thibul lo thak lam.

46. Thɔk-ɔ-thɔk ko di ker.

47. Méŋke ho samake wɔ themde che ho wo tamie.

48. Saɛ kɔ chen ha libɛn. Le gbo ne, ke kulunde chaŋ ço bie wɔɛ ben.

49. Ko lo ço nɛɛ nchinde nche loŋ pokɔni.

50. Gbɔl kɔ chende pak.

51. Mɔ hɛthiɛ nsonɔɛ mbele thiyen.
Kaiñ Tasso

There once was one young man named Kaiñ Tasso. When Kaiñ Tasso reached maturity, he took a wife. He went far away to look for (find) a woman. Kaiñ Tasso reached one village, where he saw a fine woman. This man came to (began to) love this woman very much. The woman's name was Yanken because her complexion was black. Kaiñ Tasso returned to his town and told his parents. His parents prepared themselves well and engaged the lady, a marriage gift, and they paid the marriage price at once. Kaiñ Tasso and the woman married. The parents of the lady brought her to her husband. Kaiñ Tasso and his wife They have now been married for many years. They had many boys and girls. The children are now all grown up.

But in this town where he found his wife, if somebody dies, no one is allowed to laugh loudly. Months and months pass. One day, they sent a
Tasoē jajel, wo wo naka kathba. Kain Tasso wo bempa laa wo ni woc wo ha ko meg ko nak kathille. Ye waam naa ko ko nak yaa wo, wo lor ha ndue menbul. Ndue mueke menjinde, ni nomaa ben de, wo wu jajel Kain Tasso.

Baa waam naa wo wom ko komne wo Kain Taso le jajel wo koj. Kain Taso wo bempamine ni anya wo wo ñae ko ko wul-le. Ye ña muw tire lo ña ha be kassankoe ñae lol.

Ye hue ña keni, hue ña ro hok saka ndue ñare, iso lan de ve, amaa agberba ña dikle boe ko lo ro bempa yenjoo si ro wom be hok sakaë. Amaa-0-ki, apum ña pos gbam de, apum ña pos yekeë, apum ña pos mbanaë, ni apum ña nuputha mbana ndrie ni gbere ha thon bo. Ña lee gbo pos, ni nomaa bul ñan thiyen ño chaë ton tho ki:

Nomaa chaë-a:

_Yemi, ni ntene mini o-o-o_

Amaaë ñae yom:

_Yee mi-i-i_

Nomaa chaë-a:

_Yemi, ni ntene mini o-o-o_

Amaaë ñae yom:

_Yee mi-i-i_

message to Kain Tasso that his mother-in-law was very sick. Kain Tasso prepared his wife and sent her to go to deal with her mother’s sickness. When the lady reached her sick mother, she was there for six days. On the seventh day, the old woman died, Kain Tasso’s mother-in-law.

The lady’s father sent a message to his son-in-law Kain Tasso that his mother-in-law had died. Kain Tasso and his people prepared themselves and left for the wake. When they reached the village, they greeted with the burial payment.

When the day broke, after three days of the ceremony, That morning, many women gathered in the kitchen where they prepared food for the sacrifice. These women, some were peeling potatoes, others peeling cassava, others bananas, and others mix ripe bananas with flour for frying. They remain peeling, then one lady among them raised this song:

The woman sang:

_My lady, remember me-o_

The others answered:

_My lady_

The woman sang:

_My lady, remember me-o_

The others answered:

_My lady_
Kaiņ Tasso

Namaa cha-ı:
  Yemi, ni ntęnie mini-o,
  ni ntęnie mini-o, ni ntęnie mini-o,
  ye to kəni beê limcæi chaŋba.

Amaaę ṇae yom:
  Yemi, ni ntęnie mini-o,
  ni ntęnie mini-o, ni ntęnie mini-o,
  ye to kəni beê limcæi chaŋba.

Namaa cha-ı:
  Ya gbo woki-o-o

Amaaę ṇae yom:
  Yeęe mi-i-i

Namaa cha-ı:
  Ya gbo woki-o-o

Amaaę ṇae yom:
  Ah yeęe mi-i-i

Namaa cha-ı:
  Ya gbo woki-o-o

Amaaę ṇae yom:
  Ah ye-e-e mi-i-i

The woman sang:
  My lady, remember me-o,
  remember me-o, remember me-o,
  when you go into your kingdom forever.

The woman sang:
  My lady, remember me-o,
  remember me-o, remember me-o
  when you go into your kingdom forever.

The women sing:
  I am wondering

The others answered:
  My lady

The women sing:
  I am wondering

The others answered:
  My lady

The women sing:
  I am wondering

The others answered:
  My lady
Kaij Tasso

Nɔməa cha-e-a:

Ya gbo woki-o-o,
ya gbo woki-o-o,
ya gbo woki-o-o,
Ye mɔ koni bɛɛ lɛmɛi chɔŋba.

Amaae ɲae yom:

Ya gbo woki-o-o,
ya gbo woki-o-o,
ya gbo woki-o-o,
Ye mɔ koni bɛɛ lɛmɛi chɔŋba.

(Haaŋ ni nante bɛ, ṭɔ mu tɔn tontho ki chɔl sak ha hok saka wul-le.) Lɛ ɲ ke yɛ amaae ɲa konj nuik ton thine, haliwo yɛ ɲa tɔn de, yɛ ɲa yeek bol thine.


Bel siatĩ do ki, ɲa gbi-k-gbikni tokɔ ko, kara, kara, kara, kara, kara. ɲana tiŋ ɲa siŋ ɲae sɔt-h-sothni wussɛ kune.


The women sing:

I am wondering,
I am wondering,
I am wondering,
when you go into your kingdom forever.

The others answered:

I am wondering,
I am wondering,
I am wondering,
when you go into your kingdom forever.

(Even today, people sing this song during the night of the wake.) When you see how the women amuse themselves with their songs, because when they sing, they dance with their heads.

When the women are peeling and singing, the Rat Wife and her husband are arguing in the rafters of the big kitchen. Kaij Tasso, whose mother-in-law died, lays down in the hammock near the women. Kaij Tasso hears every animal’s words, including birds and insects, let me say, all the animals in the world. Where Kaij Tasso was lying in the hammock, he sees and hears what the two rats are arguing about.

These two rats, they run-run around the kitchen rafters scurrying, scurrying, scurrying, scurrying. Both of them are playing when they enter into the thatch.

Rat Wife then said to herself, "Ah, there are women peeling cassava there, and I’m hungry here."
Rat Wife calls her husband and says to him, "My husband, the women down there are peeling cassava and are singing. Do you see them?"

"Yes, I see them, my wife."

"Look at them as they sing and shake their heads, my husband, while they are singing and dancing with their heads. Can’t you climb down and quickly seize the cassava from the basket and bring it so that I can come and eat something? Hunger is on me!"

The male rat answered and said to his wife, "Look what the woman is saying-o. Let me come down quickly from here. Are you not well? Is your head not there? Can’t you see that all the women have knives in their hands? Do you want them to go and crack my head? I’m not going anywhere."

Rat Wife said to her husband, "Hm-m-m, so you are not going there? That is no problem. But if I went and brought cassava, you would not eat it?"

The male rat answered and said to his wife, "My wife, if you descend from here and bring cassava from those sharp knives let me not eat it at all. But I am not going down there from here."

When all this argument is going between the two rats, Kaiñ Tasso was lying in his hammock and sees and hears the argument between them. Rat Wife begins to watch intently, she creeps little by little from up there. Before long, she slips and falls from kitchen rafters. She falls into the cassava basket, grabs the cassava with her teeth And, scrambling she mounts quickly and disappears in the thatch with the cassava in her mouth. The women remain peeling and singing, amid take up screaming, they
yekeai. Jo-o-o bɛl bom wɔe! ee bɛlle duko, bɛlle wɔ bɛ kun. Amaaɛ lee gbo thɔŋka lanɔ ki ñan thiyen. La libɛn bɛl maaɛ kɔŋ pe thɔŋni pɔŋ boeɛ toke wussɛ kune tɔrɔth.

15  Kaiŋ Tasso kɔŋ yeren. Siin bɛ pe lagboe wɔ ʰɔlɔka. La keɛ ni la theeɛ. La kɔŋ wɔ yɔŋ pɔŋ, kɔŋ yeren gbi.

16  Ye bɛl maaɛ kɔŋ thɔŋni boeɛ toke hiŋk wul-le ɔ biŋ wɔe, kɔ bimni soku bullai, wɔ ʰɔ ʰɔ ʰɔ-ɕɛ-ɕɛ, ni yeke wɔe che wɔn kunɔlo.

17  La venei, bɛl pokan dɛ, pook bɛl maaɛ wɔe hun ko laa wɔe ni hɔɛ, "Yem, ñka mi yeke mɔe pum ni ya ɔsm, ndike ma mi."

18  Ni laa wɔe, bɛl maaɛ, wɔe gbaki ni hɔ ko wɔ kɔe, "M-m-m shiyeɛɛ, ñhɔ lan bɛ: ish-sh-sh, ayo, ayo, mɔ ñ ɔsm! Mma hɔe pum, ke ñɔe ñɔn gbi! Mɔm kɔmɔ vis ki; ñ chen ndik mɔ mɔe, tama ni raŋka ñɔ mɔe."

19  Bɛl pokan dɛ wɔe hɔ ko laa wɔe, "Mba, ha yeke mɔɛ la mɔ mi woŋhɔɛ?"

20  Bɛl maaɛ wɔe gbaki ni hɔ ko pɔo wɔe, "Ndele thumɔɛɛ. Ayo, ye pɔ pe mi keten kende yekeɛ ha yeke kie, la bi ñɔe ya ka mɔ ñɔn ni nsɔm? Ya chen lan haa gbi. Ya chen mɔ ñɔn ka ni nsɔm. Mɔm kɔmɔ kɛr ki. Kakeiŋ ya chenmɔ ñɔn ka kith bɛ. Mbiɛn ndap. Ya kɔŋ che boe-o toke ka ha ndue ñra gbi. Ya sɔthɔni yen ha joo. Ñ challa gbo ka. Ñkɔni ayeŋ gbi ha ko ñeile yen joo, ni nsiiɛ ya kun dumɔ. say, "The rat fell down, fell down in the basket of cassava. It was a very big rat! the rat fell, it was even pregnant." The women remain arguing this among themselves. Quickly Rat Wife climbed up the kitchen into the thatch.

Kaiŋ Tasso was confused--he didn’t know whether he was in this world. What he saw and what he heard. It had carried him far away.

When Rat Wife has gone up the kitchen from the death that missed her She went and sat in the corner panting ʰɔ-ɕɛ-ɕɛ-ɕɛ, with the cassava (tucked) in her bosom.

Not long after, the male rat, the husband of the female rat, came to her and said, "Madam, give me some of your cassava, let me eat, I am feeling hungry."

And his wife, Rat Wife, answered saying to him, "An expression of disapproval, you don’t say it, you will not eat it! Don’t say some, but say all of it! You son of a bitch! You are not hungry, it’s foolishness and a curse is on you."

Rat husband said to his wife, "Madam, is it for your cassava that you are abusing me?"

Rat Wife replied to her husband, "Look at the dog. Yes, when they wanted to cut me up like this cassava, that’s why you said, 'Let me give it to you to chew?' I’m not going to do it at all. I will give you nothing to chew. You are the son of a snake! Not at all, I’m not going to give you even half. You are not ashamed. I have been here on top of this kitchen for three whole days. I didn’t get anything to eat. You only sit here. You don’t go anywhere to
Kaiř Tasso


[22] Bël pokan de, "Mba, ñaŋ ya mɔ hɔm ve?"


[24] Bël pokan de: "Ntelɛ mi ya hum, ni ya hun mɔ gbɛeti-gbɛeti bol."


[26] Bël pokan de: "Mba, mmani, mma ki haa ni la nɛki mi."

[27] Bël maaë: "Ha yeke ɔŋ ya woŋ iŋbɔolɔŋ mi? Ya yemaɛ fuli ni la nɛki mɔ."

[28] Lanɔ ki gbi la bël siatiŋ de ña pokŋiɛŋ thiŋeŋ de, Kaiř Taso hine pɛllei wo la ke ni wo la theeɛ. Kaiř Taso koŋ pokɔni bɛ ko wul lijajel wɔɛ lo hune. Wɔe mam tokɔ tokɔ kaathba, "Ha-ha-ha-hae-e-e-e ha-ha-ha, ye len la ki-a-e-e-e!"

[29] Amaaɛ ña bɛmpa ñjɛɛ ha sakaɛ ñae thee ye Kaiř Taso mam kaathbaɛ: ñae tpe yi-yini-ŋken find me food to eat, and you know my belly is strong."

Rat Wife said to her husband, "Women are peeling cassava, they dice the cassava. And they are singing, then I said to you, 'Go down quietly and take the cassava and bring it, so that I can get something to eat today.' You said you will not do it at all, and you did not do it. I have just given my life so that I may get cassava to eat, you told me to give you some to eat. You child of a viper, I will not do it at all. You child of a monkey, you will not shit it. You don’t have shame."

Rat husband: "Woman, is it me you are abusing like that?"

Rat Wife: "Yes, it is you I am telling that."

Rat Husband: "Wait, let me come knock you on the head."

Rat Wife: "You, I am waiting for you. Your strength only works on women. You are not ashamed. I will die in your hands today."

Rat Husband: "Woman, stop that, don’t make me hurt you."

Rat Wife: "For the cassava which I gave my life for? I really want it to hurt you."

All this exchange of words between the two rats, Kaiř Tasso lying in the hammock saw and heard. Kaiř Tasso has forgotten that he came to his mother-in-law’s funeral. He laughed loudly, "Ha, ha, ha! What a thing is this!"

The women who were preparing the food for the sacrifice heard when Kaiř Tasso was laughing loudly. They begin to ask themselves, saying, "What
is this young man laughing about? Why, with the
death of his mother-in-law, why is he laughing?
Does it please him that his mother-in-law died?"
The women continue talking about it, among
themselves until it reached the townspeople.
The townspeople then said, this man has broken
the town law. Let us go and tell his father-in-law.
Kain Tasso, whose mother-in-law died, heard about
it.
The town chief and the elders then called for
Kain Tasso. They put him in handcuffs and brought
him to the bari in front of all the people, where they
will judge him. If he is guilty, they will kill him as
the town law says. Where the people gathered in
the bari, there are people among them who hear what
the animals and the birds speak.
As Kain Tasso, whom they have accused of
laughing, in the court bari, they are arranging the
funeral contributions. They are counting the money,
collecting it on the big table openly. The rats are
there on top of the bari, they saw how they gathered
the money on the table. Much of this money is in
paper (currency). Everybody in the court bari
focused their minds on the money on the table.
Kain Tasso stood there in the bari waiting to
judge him.
The rats began scampering in the bari rafters,
kara-kara, kara-kara, kara-kara, and squeak fi-i-i, fi-
i-i, fi-i-i.
One rat among the rats then said, "Gentlemen, let
us run down and grab the money on the table and
bring it up here."
The others answered and said, "Okay, it is good; let us scatter."

There are some people among them who hear words of animals and birds.

One then said, "My people, do not forget the money on the table, it is open, cover it up; the rats said something."

One person then said, "Mister, I, too, heard what the rats said, but they will not believe anyone."

The people in the bari, one said, "Gentlemen, get out of here; what rat speaks and you understand it? Don’t lie to us."

Kaïñ Tasso stands he hears what the rats are arguing about up in the bari. But this time, he did not laugh at all, because he is before the chiefs.

One man there said again, "Gentlemen, cover the money, the rats want to do something."

Still they did not cover the money, not long, the rats then run up in the bari. Scamper, scamper, scamper they slipped from all directions, they grabbed the money from the table and they return climbing up, scampering up into the bari rafters, all in different directions. They (the rats) went and hid in the thatch.

Among the many people who were gathered in the bari, they remain yelling loudly, saying, "Rats, rats, rats, nothing they can do; the rats have taken plenty of money away."

All the people in the bari say, "My people, what thing is this? That is why people were saying just now, 'let us cover the money!'''

When this passed, the chiefs and the elders then
Kaiñ Tasso

ŋae vel Kaiñ Taso ha thonũka wo.

Kaiñ Taso woe hun sèm abeε-ae ni ŋgbakoe chee, ni ŋgbekteε che woŋkẹnte.

ŋa woe yii-ni ŋa hɔe, "Nẹn mbi len gbi ha hɔ, ha la pɔ ka mɔ ŋhɔe?"

Kaiñ Tasso woe gbaki ni hɔe, "Yeŋkẹẹfẹba abẹna mi."

"La mbi ha hɔa?" abeεae ŋa woe pe yii.

Kaiñ Tasso woe pe gbaki ni hɔe, "Abẹna mi, ya gbo hɔe, ya chọŋ-sekẹ ɓaliwɔ anyiŋ ŋa lọ ka ŋa theẹ ŋhọk ma ŋviẹ ni veẹẹ. Ẹẹ anja ki ŋa che na boe ko lọ amaaẹ che na pos yekeẹ, ni ŋa theẹẹ la bẹl siatj de thelie, ya chẹn na sèm ka ŋẹn chee ẹn kẹn. Ẹẹ ŋan ayẹn ŋa ọkọ ke ni theẹẹ la haani bai kaẹ. Lanọ ki la ya bi gbo ha hɔe."

Anyा pum bai ko ŋae hɔe, "Abẹẹ-ae, la taalaŋgba-o hɔe la τίτ-τίτ. Mbol gbi che ọni; hi ke ni hi theẹẹ la haani bai kaẹ. Taalaŋgbaẹ biẹni iilọ gbi."

Ọm mẹl wo ni kọni. Abẹẹẹ ŋae ka Kaiñ Taso ison. Ṣe woe kue ŋgbekteε ẹkẹnt, ni ọm chereŋ Kaiñ Tasso.


called Kaiñ Tasso to judge him.

Kaiñ Tasso then came and stood before the chiefs and elders, with the handcuffs on his hands.

They asked him and said, "Young man, do you have anything to say of what they accuse you?"

Kaiñ Tasso answered and said, "Very well, my parents.

"What do you have to say?" the chiefs then asked him again.

Kaiñ Tasso again answered and said, "My parents, what I only say, I give thanks because people are here they hear the words of animal and birds. If these people were there where these women were peeling the cassava, and heard what the two rats were arguing about I wouldn’t have stood here before you alone. But you yourselves have seen and heard what happened in the bari. It is all this I have to say to you."

Some people in the bari said, "Chiefs, what the young man says is straightforward. It is not a lie at all; we saw and heard what happened in the bari. The young man did not have any badness at all."

They left him and departed. The chiefs gave Kaiñ Tasso dreams. They took the handcuffs off his hands and they freed Kaiñ Tasso.

Four days later this man left the ceremony for his mother-in-law. Kaiñ Tasso returned to his town and his people came to welcome him back from his mother-in-law’s funeral.
Appendices
A. Non-English symbols used in this book

ɔ the lower mid back vowel as in ho ‘speak, say’ and sɔke ‘fowl’; English law.
ch the voiceless affricate as in Cho ‘first born male’s name’ and cho ‘war’; English church.
ε the lower mid front vowel as in pɛɛ ‘boa constrictor’ and hɛlle ‘salt’; English let, sell.
gb the voiced labialvelar stop as in gbɔl ‘heart’ and gbatɔ ‘cutlass’.
j the voiced affricate as in jœ ‘food’ and jɛm ‘fire’; English judge.
η the velar nasal as in ηa ‘they, people’ and rɔŋ ‘truth’; English sing.
ny the palatal nasal as in nyumi ‘extinguish’ and nya ‘thin, poor’.
th the voiceless dental stop as in the ‘hear, understand’ and tho ‘bush, forest’.
B. Glossary

a
Abolom
ai
ajok
alo
alitoma
anyin
apa
apuma
atok
ba
ba
Ba
baba
bala/balani
bali
balmaa
ban
bang
bank
bar
bancho
banjbel
banjtel
bas
I
Sherbro people
inside
son
under, to
rice variety
people
father
children
on, on top of
father, master
father
Mr., Father
squirrel
cane basket
act foolishly
shed
hug
wealth, be rich	
two-sided knife
sweep up
rope
rope, vine
nail, hammer
float
necklace
belt
sweep
bawom
bawombawom
boo
böm
böm
böm
bonni
bönth
bönthö
bos
bosolin
bosul
bela
bellai
beth
bė
bėl
bėlen
bėn
bėŋ
bėŋ
bėŋ
bėŋe
bės
bi
bikė
bind
bip
bithir
bitni
grandfather
great grandparents
hat, cap
frog
meet
drag
meet
meet
cold
quench
cold, rainy
sail
in the farmhouse
box
self
rat
near
old
chair
leg, foot
axe
broom
take, have
storm, wind
bench holding mast
fart
bottle
nail
### Glossary

| boi       | plate             | chɔŋ ... len | love     |
| boiɛ     | dish              | cheara       | scissors |
| bokɛ     | sauce             | cheɛ         | was      |
| bol      | head              | chen         | do not   |
| bol      | head              | cheni        | is not   |
| bolmin   | idiot             | chentni      | tiptoe   |
| bom      | big, large        | chɛŋk        | enemy, hate |
| boo      | bread, rice flour | chɛkɛm      | chin     |
| boo      | kitchen           | chɛli        | home, dwelling |
| boo      | kitchen           | chɛθh        | cook     |
| bot      | boat              | chieɛ        | shore, land |
| bue      | dig               | chisenɛ      | sneeze   |
| bue      | dig               | chokro       | loinclot |
| bul      | one               | dɛ           | the      |
| buthba   | rice variety      | di           | catch, mix |
| ɔ        | or                | dik          | bundle (of wood) |
| chai     | lift              | dikil        | collect, gather |
| chal     | sit               | dis          | heavy, hard |
| chala    | mat               | dri          | red (hot) |
| chali    | chair             | duk          | fall     |
| chamak, chamakin | chew | dul | leak |
| chanth   | baby              | dumo         | raise |
| chanɛ    | tooth             | dumoni       | raise, trained |
| chanŋ    | surpass           | e            | the |
| charaŋ   | well, nicely      | fai          | spicy |
| chasa    | bottle gourd      | faka(thi)    | village(s) |
| chathi   | feathers          | fama         | farmer |
| cho      | fight             | fan          | cane rat, “cutting grass” |
| cholı    | all night         | fonwɛi       | witchcraft |
| chonŋ    | dish out, lay eggs| fos          | knock |
| chonŋ ... len | like | fosa | strength |
Glossary

fe
money
fe
money
ferna
clouds
fothi
be knotted
futh
tell
gbaka
uproot
gbako
laughter
gbal
grow
gbala
write
gbaloni
log
gbani
writing
gbankthani
lean against
gbasa
lean against
gbatl
wrap
gbatc
headtie
gboksa
cutlass
gbol
slap
gbonontma
a lot
gbon
scrub
gbomog
heart
gbomoma
shirt
gbomoma
bracelet
gbomomoma
gave birth
gbomomoma
give birth
ghenbgene
ant
gher
much
ghbet
hit on the head
gbet
walk
gbTex
bath apparatus
gbTexoni
ring
gbTex
dirty
gbTexth
earring
gbTexnu
run
gbkin, gbkni
smoke
gbimi
marry
gbisij
shorts
just
completely
all
indeed
sock
completely
hammer
all
knife for palm cabbage
indeed
in order to, for
they
that
make
sea
crowd
that
fishing fence
sea
shine
fishing fence
anchor
speak
it
quarrel
speak
say
weather, rain
say
eye
breathe
rest
### Glossary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<td>tell you</td>
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<td>door</td>
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<td>boil</td>
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<tr>
<td>heŋ</td>
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<td>heŋdɛ</td>
<td>(the) wind</td>
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<td>hiɔl</td>
<td>four</td>
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<td>fly</td>
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<td>from</td>
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<td>dry</td>
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<td>come from</td>
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<td>hu</td>
<td>yard, fence</td>
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<td>day</td>
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<td>be glad</td>
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<td>school</td>
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<td>go</td>
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<td>back, buttocks</td>
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<td>malombo, stone fruit</td>
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<td>bucket, pail</td>
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<td>hundred</td>
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<tr>
<td>këna</td>
<td>rainbow</td>
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<tr>
<td>kënthi</td>
<td>break (into laughter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>kënìya</td>
<td>uncle</td>
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<td>këpië</td>
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<td>here, there</td>
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<td>this</td>
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<td>kil</td>
<td>house</td>
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<td>kilëihól</td>
<td>door</td>
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<tr>
<td>killë</td>
<td>house, home</td>
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<tr>
<td>ko</td>
<td>to, on, in, etc.</td>
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<td>ko</td>
<td>consider</td>
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<td>cockroach</td>
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<tr>
<td>koną</td>
<td>finish</td>
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**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lem</th>
<th>become caught in a net</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>len</td>
<td>follow</td>
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<tr>
<td>lepi</td>
<td>thing, something</td>
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<td>leyno</td>
<td>disgrace</td>
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<td>depart</td>
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<td>is, be</td>
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<td>libaŋ</td>
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<td>anger</td>
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<td>one</td>
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<td>lipal</td>
<td>often</td>
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<td>lithantʰεndoki</td>
<td>ordinary</td>
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<tr>
<td>lo</td>
<td>sun</td>
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<tr>
<td>loεε</td>
<td>ordinary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lok</td>
<td>stay, continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lok</td>
<td>sleepy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lom</td>
<td>mothers sister, auntie</td>
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<tr>
<td>lonk</td>
<td>haltingly, with difficulty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lwε</td>
<td>tail</td>
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<td>m</td>
<td>knee</td>
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<td>ma</td>
<td>hole</td>
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<td>scar</td>
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<td>laugh</td>
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<td>burn</td>
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<td>stop</td>
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<td>math</td>
<td>hide</td>
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<td>mathni</td>
<td>hide oneself</td>
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<tr>
<td>mbaana</td>
<td>bananas</td>
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<tr>
<td>mi</td>
<td>seven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>needle</td>
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<tr>
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<td>me, my</td>
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</table>
Glossary

mi  mummy
miliŋ  tongue
min  nose
min  swallow
die
hate
brothers
fell
forehead
patience
you
Spider
spider
road
sick
illness
soil, earth
pull
person
rich person
person
(you) sit
palm tree climber
woman
mucus
first-born
man, husband
farmer
elder
soft
palm kernel oil

ndo  where
ndembe
ndik
nɛɛ
nɛki, nɛkiɛ
ngbam
ni
ningbi
njalle
nkan
nlèli
nswei
ntolle
ntrow
nui
nuka
nvise
nya
nya
nyai
nyangbɛ
nyathi
nyohol
nyonkɔth
nyek
nyi
nyiik
nyiki
nyumpɔ
nyun
nyuŋ
### Glossary

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</tr>
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<td>arm, hand</td>
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<td>po</td>
<td>be confused</td>
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<td>thick (of liquids)</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>my mother</td>
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<td>window</td>
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<td>cat</td>
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<td>yɔŋ</td>
<td>fish trap</td>
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<tr>
<td>ye</td>
<td>then, when</td>
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<tr>
<td>ye</td>
<td>dance</td>
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<td>-ye</td>
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## Glossary

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<td>dance with</td>
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<td>boil</td>
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<td>want</td>
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<td>mother, lady</td>
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<td>waist beads</td>
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<td>sesame or benni seeds</td>
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<td>hold tight</td>
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<td>yi</td>
<td>we</td>
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<td>plant</td>
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<tr>
<td>yuleč</td>
<td>fish</td>
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</table>
C. Translations of full sentences

A bi nak.
A chọŋ mọ ọ̀sa.
A chọŋ mọ len.
A chẹn theni Ṽẹ̀ ndọ̀ẹ.
A họ̀h, a Ṽẹ̀.
A mọ ọ̀sa.
A mith mọ.
A yema mani ha kul thafẹ.
A yi ko ẹ̀nyai mẹ̀ndẹ̀ ko yami.
Aa, nọ gbisìẹ̀, a bi ọ̀pọkan.
Abolom hale anyin ha si ọ̀họ̀lẹ.
Ba Na lee mathini.
Bikey siwa kilẹ.
Bojẹ ọ̀pọ̀ ka mẹ̀n.
Bolmin mọ ẹ!
Bue luẹ.
Bue luẹ̀.
Ọ̀ n kache ndik?
Chọŋ ẹ̀kọ̀ len.
Cheni chali ọ̀ ki? Ọ̀ẹ̀li ọẹ̀lẹ̀, nchali!
Chenkẹ mi.
fothi mboł
Ha bọ̀nthọ baha yínẹ̀ ni che hol lok, lok.
Ha bọ̀solin gbọl ẹ̀ hí kul mẹ̀n ẹ̀.
Ha kul mẹ̀n ọgbẹ̀thlaẹ̀ ja libul la che
nake.
Translations of full sentences

Hoe le ho lel.
The wind is cold.

Hẹpẹ ho bọs.
The wind is strong.

Hẹpẹ ho dis.
The day is cold, the days are cold.

Hue bosul, hue thibosul.
The day is cold.

Hueę ṣọ bos.
We take this ordinary rope and jump with it.

I koi bang lithanthẹndoki i ko peŋka.
The wind met me there and I almost drowned.

Iṣilo ha silẹ mi.
Bees sting me.

Isin de tala mi.
Poverty depresses me.

Itu le ho dri.
The iron is red hot.

Ka lo pọ dumọ mi te a koŋ gbako.
I was raised here until I was old.

Kam jo wai.
Give me food stuff!

Kọ ha rek kil.
He went to build a house.

Kọ koŋ gbo ho, moi choŋ.
When the rice is dry, then you dish it out.

Kendi le lo nyun.
The knife is dull.

kẹnthi igbaka
to laugh loud and heartily

Kil mi le ho gbo dul.
My roof is leaking a lot.

Kotha le ho rẹth.
The cloth is wide.

Kothathi woọ le ṣe chen bọnni leẹ ko.
His clothes don’t drag on the ground.

Kufẹ ko koŋ thekini.
The trousers are torn.

Kulmmen ho mi.
I am thirsty.

La che le mẹmin.
It will be joyful.

Lawọle wo gbemo tamọ kẹẹọh bul.
His wife bore a fine baby boy.

Lo a kache make
where I used to mark

Lem wo veleŋ.
Follow him.

Ligber yi pei imam hi le.
Often we shed our tears.

M gbisoẹ?
Are you married?

M ma ha lothetic!
Do not enter between (don't interfere)!

M ma yikita thok le!
Don’t shake the tree!

M paa mi hink nak!
Protect me from sickness!

Mbas killę charaŋ.
Sweep the house clean!
Translations of full sentences

Mbiʃn ndap.
Mbuŋkluŋ de ma bom
Mënde ma thɔi.
Mënde ma yel.
Mënte so ɗe ko sonthul.
Mi, n ko kil kandɛ alɔ?
Mpanθ ma apuma maɛɛ, a ko pɔɛ.
N lɛsa mi ka pia mɔ lɛ.
N siŋk yailɛ!
N tunṭn mma ki tɛm bol mɔ!
N vunṭh tamo lɛ!
Nak lɔ ko kath, Kɔn wɔ gbo tiini.
Nɔ lε mɔ lɔ tokɔsi lɛ, mɔ bi ha bas lɔ.
Nɔbaliwɔ ki.
Nɔɛ wɔ pɔŋ pisin igbɛthɛ mɛndɛ.
Nɔmɛa bul wɔ chai ton tho ki.
Nɔmɔk lɛ ko hɔk wɔn mɨnɛ lɛ ko isay.
Nɔsanth wɔ ki, m ma wɔ lepi!
Nɛɛ gbo pulae, wɔ chai bol wɔɛ.
i Braima chal ŋo kune ni che pakil
Ni wɔ ye bom nɔma bɛn.
Ningbi lɛ wɔ lɛ ve fonwɛi.
Nsweĩ ki ma bi pukɔ gber.
ŋa mi sek bɛdi!
ŋa kantha rɛnth lɛ!
ŋa ko lanθ mbana lɛ!
ŋa ko lerka bot lɛ.
ŋa ko math fe lɛ.
ŋa ko mi sɔkǐe kil mi lɛ!
ŋa ko mǔ thɔk lɛ!
ŋa ko pel wɔmɛɛ!

You have no shame.
The waves are big.
The water is dripping.
The water is boiling.
The arrow of the bow is sharp.
Mummy, did you attend school?
(Doing) the work of girls, I go fetch water.
Guide me with your hand.
Play with the cat!
Bend over or you will bump your head!
Push that boy outside!
This illness is serious, Kong faints constantly.
The person who dirties it, will have to clean it.
This is a rich man.
Someone put a dirty rag in the water.
One woman raised this song.
The mucus coming from his nose is offensive.
He is an elder, don’t disgrace him!
If you step on a worm, it will raise its head.
with Braima sitting inside it and trembling
And then he met an old woman.
The owl is the bird of witchcraft.
This soap foams very much.
Give me a slice of bread!
Close the door!
Go hang the bananas (to let them ripen).
Go repair the boat.
Go hide the money.
Go rethatch my house’s roof!
Go fell the tree!
Go load the boat!
Translations of full sentences

η) ko pọŋ mɛnde!
η) ko sak hinth lɛ!
η) ko suth chathi sɔk lɛ!
η) ko wuthiɛ pɔnth lɛ ve hɔ hinkɔ pɔto!
η) kuɛi ndembe lɛ ni rokos lɛ ni ṭa koɔ ma wɔk!

ηa ka che mi soiɛ, a koiye.
ηo pe wɔ gbal mbolomde.
Palli lɛ ho hanth.
Panthɛ ma dis.
Pɔ koŋko ɡbo futh, pɔ kɔi panth thiban.
Pɔ ɲa yuki, pɔ ɲa haa nyiki?
Pɔle ho saki.
Pɛ di simɛnte.
Pɛi chɛtʰ boke pɛi ya jɔe.
Rai lɛ ho ɡbo ɿɛm.
Sɔk lɛ wo chɔŋ.
Sese duk thɔk lɛ.
Sup lɛ ho rigbeɾiɡbe.
Taamɔe wo baata.
Tamɔ tɔnde wo ɡbankthani kotha kathil bom.
Tamɔle kere kel wo ni wo ye wu.
Te ye woth kunde wo mi hun gbemɔ ka.
Thɔkɛ ko jeth.
Thɔsun ɭe ho mi, chɔli lo ya thɔsun.
Thumɔe lɛ gbos.
Tok lɛ ko peŋ pare hoɔe.
trithi hi lɛ ni fakathi hi lɛ
Tumɔe lɛ wo pikith lom wo lɛ.
Veɛ chu mi.

Go pour out the water!
Go make the bed!
Go pluck the fowl!
Go untie the parcel that has come from Europe!
Take the limes and the orange and go squeeze them!

They used to scare me so that I would scream.
How one writes Sherbro
The sun shines.
The work is heavy.
After they uproot it, they tie it in sheaves.
Do they plant here, do they make plantations?
The rain will stop soon
They mix cement.
They will cook the sauce and the rice.
The paper is very thin.
The chicken lays eggs.
Sese fell from the tree.
The soup is thick.
The boy acts the fool.
The small boy wrapped the big Kente cloth around himself.

The boy was bitten by a snake and died.
When she got pregnant she gave birth to me here.
The stick is weak.
I have a cough, the whole night I was coughing.
The dog barks.
The thunder cracked the other day.
our towns and villages
The dog wags his tail.
The thorn pierced me.
Translations of full sentences

Wo fos kil le hel ko. He knocked on the door.
Wo hi telè ka muyu. He is patiently waiting for us.
Wo mɔ̀ sɔnthɔ̀ charaŋ. He would sew it for you nicely.
Wo mɔ̀ yema nyathi sumɔhɔl. He wants to lick your mouth.
Wo nɛkĩɛ le wo kuyɛ yu ihuk lɛ. He hurt himself when he took a fish from the hook.
Wo nyɔŋkɔtɔh le wɔ̀ gbo ye o gbe. She is stylish when dancing or walking.
Wo toth pak lɛ. He sucks (the marrow out of) the bone.
Wo ye hun hoc, n theɛ bip? He then came to say, Did you hear the fart?
Wo po nd tɔn. And then she started to sing.
Wo ɔ̀n bɛ ka cheɛ fama. He was a farmer
Wo ɔ̀n gbo nan. This one is pulling [his rope].
Woth dik iwɔm bom. He carried a big bundle of wood.
Ya fama, a ra. I’m a farmer, I cultivate
Ya ɔnu mɔ̀ ɛm thihoɛ-hoła. I come to tell you something secretly.
Ya imɔl lɛ ai. I am very sad.
Ya ko la yendapani ha leynɔ. I consider it a pity to depart from you
Ya mɔnɛ ni mbali mĩ! I am poor, now make me rich!
Ya nyi wɔ̀ ṣo dumɔnıyẹ. Our mother raised us.
Ya sɔnɔ ɔ̀ chencha. I dreamt of you yesterday.
Ya wo wei. I fear him.
Yaas balani kɔmɔwɛ. The mother hugged her child.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ bɛnθɔ̀ yeŋthi. The cat is between the chairs.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ ko mesɛ. The cat is on the table.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ mesɛ alo. The cat is under the table.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ mesɛ bɛleŋ. The cat is near the table.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ mesɛ veleŋ. The cat is behind the table.
Yaiyɛ ɔ̀ sampaaŋ. The cat is in the basket.
Yamɔ̀ wɔ̀ nɔn ðɔ̀ wɔ̀sa? Your mother, where does she live?
Yay ɛ le wo nya. The cat is thin.
Yaye ɔ̀ kepiɛ tamɔ̀ lɛ. The cat scratched the boy.
Ye koŋ ɔɛ n dikil panθɛ gbo And you finish collecting all the dishes.
Translations of full sentences

You then open (it).
When you were young, were you sent to school?
When they sing, they dance with their heads.
Hold tight to the branch of the tree.
After harvesting, we put up the rice in the farmhouse.
We cast the hooks (and) I catch (one).
The fish stinks awfully!
The fish is quite soft.
D. Translations of proverbs

1. Le banae yema gbọ wu, kọ ye ho botho, ha gbemọ.
When a banana tree is about to die, it sends out shoots for further fruit.

2. Poe-poe hoẹ ifọn ra.
Early is the secret of brushing.

The tortoise wants to punch but his arm is short.

From the way frog squats you know how far it will jump.

5. Nọ wọ tuẹ gbọ ha wọn pọllen.
A man wears a hat to add to his height.

A man wears a hat to add to his height.

7. Toke ẹniṣẹ gbọ ni bẹlẹ wọ ẹniṣẹ.
The thunder crashes and the mouse passes by.

You switch the foot side to the head side of the bed.

9. Wo ẹniṣẹ pẹlẹ ẹniṣẹ ọjọ, ni le ọjọ kuanọ igbẹth.
He is washing the cup outside, leaving the inside dirty.
Translations of proverbs

10. Mrőhọ thumọ pak, ni bi ha nyathi gbimde hɔm thibẹn.
   You give a dog bone, it has to lick the dust from your feet.

11. Viil lom vil che pẹn hakla.
   An animal with a long tail cannot jump over a fence trap.

12. Su bul kọ chen leiŋ ila.
   One finger cannot remove a louse.

13. Ha pǐe kọŋ nyae, labi wọ chaŋ lan puthule atọke?
   Because elephant has become thin, is that why it should cross on a rotten bridge?

   A setting sun cannot dry rice.

15. Nchala mi thipẹre họe yan bol lọ tun.
   You are sitting on my shoulder and you say my head stinks.

   Pouring water on a stone.

17. To chen duk gbal alọ.
   A fig will not fall from a plum tree.

18. Fẹs gbo mindẹ, họe họ hok imam.
   If you hit the nose, tears will run from the eyes.

19. Nke gbo ọ̀ bom ọ̀ gbikinì péle sẹkìle, ẹ yẹn che won gbo thọi, ke wo thọi yen.
   If you see an elder running in the dry rice, if something is not chasing him,
   he is chasing something.
Translations of proverbs

20. No chen som gbeŋ kra ka ndap.
A person does not eat crab with shyness.

21. Thumœ muyu wo som pak joo.
The patient dog eats the fattest bone.

22. Thɔth thiyen bul tha chal kani.
Equal buttocks sit together.

23. Pɔmdε hɔ pethil kulunde, hɔn hɔ wɔ bolie
The leaf that is sweet to a goat, is the one that gives you runny belly.

24. Kuluŋ thi chen keni binthi kune.
A black goat is not visible in a cage.

25. Le weie gbo len, len la mɔ wei.
If you are afraid of something, something is afraid of you.

If your hand stays long in the hive, there is something better.

27. Ko lɔ yenjo kεleŋde hɔ ma simεŋjɛmɛ, ni kunde hɔ duth.
Before good food spoils, let stomach burst.

The road, no matter how long it is, it has an ending.

29. Kɛn kɔ dini ŋkɛn.
The raffia palm kills itself.

30. Ẹkuł gbo mɛnde, kɛ ma ma ɛlɛi.
When drinking water, don't look at it.
Translations of proverbs

31. Wọ tu, kẹ wọ yiktha iteẹ.
He pounds, but he shakes the mortar.

32. Limani lo chaŋ ipumaŋ.
Respect is better than full belly.

33. Nọ chen binthma thigbikan ni rikisi.
One does not confuse running and walking.

34. Thok bom gbi kọ bi baŋ.
Every big tree has a hole.

35. Gbani kọ chende he hal.
Walking beside the sea is not crossing it.

36. Kẹr bin mọ gbo, ọke gbo sake mọ gbikni.
If a snake just misses you, when you see an earthworm you will run.

37. Ma ọke ọ ọgbute, ọke ọne ọ ka ọ seẹ
Don't blame the leper, blame the one who gave him the spoon.

38. A ma mọ saka, ni nyie mi ye drie mọ thiholla?
Let me not have sleepless night for you, then have you ask me why my eyes are red?

Frog will not tell lies about snake.

40. Nkuai ọkẹlẹn ma chen vei gbuluai.
Good palmoil will not stay long in the calabash.

41. Nson ma thumọ ma wọ gbo le kune.
The dreams of a dog remain in its belly.
42. Kel nakaε ni manγo puthulleε.  
A sick monkey with a rotten mango.

43. Sɔk la gbem chen pɛŋ lijɛm.  
Suckling fowl cannot jump over fire.

44. Pia sɛkil hɔ chen nyathini.  
You don’t lick a dry hand.

45. Lom thibul lɔ thak lam.  
Unity can split the pumpkin.

46. Thɔk-o-thɔk kɔ di ker.  
Every stick can kill a snake.

47. Mɛŋke hɔ samakε wɔ themde che hɔ wɔ tamieε.  
The day the bush bird hatches its eggs is not the day you know what type of birds they are.

A heavy beard is not a result of age. If that were so, then a goat would be older than its owner.

49. Kɔ lɔ mɔ nɛɛ nchinde nche lɔn ʁɔkɔni.  
When you step on feces, you will never forget the spot.

50. Gboɬ kɔ chende pak.  
The heart is not bone.

51. Mɔ hɛθie nsonɛɛ mɓɛɬɛ thiyɛn.  
You pick out the small palm nut from among the big ones.