The recording took place around 10a in the barrie when we expected the air to be still but there was still a very slight and occasional breeze from the north (land side). The typical pattern is for there to be a land breeze in the early morning that gives way to an ocean breeze a little later in the day. (We always try to record somewhere in between.)

Tried to overcome the possible interference by erecting a barrier on the wind side of the bararray, a large piece of cloth indeed prevented most wind from getting by

Pa Seku had travelled by his own means in a very small canoe from Kpangama to visit before our departure – he brought us a dozen or so oranges and ended up spending the night after telling us he would be heading back in the late afternoon – he said he came because he had some new stories, but we put off the recording until the next morning (after he indicated he was staying overnight) when the winds would be at a minimum

A persistent low-intensity noise – comparable to tape hiss – persisted throughout – we tried adjusting the settings on the microphones, moving the microphones, putting on the microphone wind socks, using different sources of power, and pretty much everything we could think of to get rid of the noise but all to no avail – sounded like the noise with the primitive outdoor recordings of British public television
There were loud frogs in the background and the clanging of Janette in the kitchen

Seku Abdullai was as animated as ever, gesticulating wildly to indicate deictic centers, pausing dramatically, varying loudness, and using the odd ideophone

He offered us three stories and something of a narration

1. War story
2. Ghost story
3. Jealous story
4. The old days – we had asked him to tell us something about the old days when he was a small boy (he is now 92), especially how things then were different from what he sees today – we had originally planned to have H and T ask him questions as prompts, but he needed little inducement to do some talking

He was pretty much exhausted after the story telling and soon retired to the hammock – he ended up leaving about 2pm that afternoon “sharp four o’clock”

SYNOPSIS

Pa Sheku Abdulai will on marriage is an account of how he got his first wife. It is a detail description of how some marriages are done in those days.

He told us how his mother saw this woman on her usual travels. She came back and inform her husband about it, and the need to get their son a wife since he is now matured.

She went back to propose to the lady who agreed after enquiring who the man might be. She gave her gifts and money to cement the relationship. So a date was set for the two families to gather after the initial contact with the girl’s family. Preparations were done and the two families met.
As usual, hand shakes and greetings followed, and the young lady was asked if she wants the man. Then they asked them to continue with the process since the woman has consented. There was plenty of food and wine.

Marrying a girl in those days had a lot of hurdles. One hurdle a man had to clear is the attempt from relatives to block your progress through faults. They will say oh our daughter is a thief or wet bed so you can’t marry her etc, and you will say no problem. So you have to clear those impediments with money.

At the end of the marriage a hand shake was given for the lady to follow the husband at a later date. Food was prepared in both camps. When the wife was eventually taken to her husband, she was handed over to two old women in the town. They served as what we call “god dady” in krio. They represent the wife’s parents there.

Tenago silagba
When you get matured. 0:03

Hana gole yen, cen kegele hun
If it were, but not now. 0:08

ya pamu ke mu, Wolfe
when your father sees you, he said 0:10
(this is said in the context where a father admires his son growing up)

yegi mie lagba ya wo tuna
when my male son gets matured 0:13

ya wo tuna numa
I will find him a woman

kenga yamu wo lei kele
perhaps your mother will be travelling 0:16
(mother will be on her usual travel)
si wɔ ke wama si wɔ lemala yapa mu
and happened to see a young woman 0:19

si wɔ lemala yapa mu
she will tell the father

wɔ bɛ hale, hana gole yapaamu mu wɔle bia, wɔ le bia oo.
The she said if your father’s name is Bia 0:24

Bia, wama laa wɔc wɔc mugbato yɔɔn kεnin
Bia, there is a young and fine lady at Mugbato 0:26

yana ke wɔ kɛi e yan yale numa yama hɔn jɛn o jɛn
But I did not say anything to her because I am a woman. 0:29

ya mu lapɛn lema 0:34
I would tell first

Wɔle guwɔɔn
Is it true

Wɔle ɛɛ
She said yes

Yi kɔlɔ yɔn la yegimie yen
Let us go there for our son

Ma sen hale han kuf
When we go there first. 0:41

Wɔ hale gu wɔn
He said, Is that true.

Yapaam wɔ cen kɔ o.
The father did not go. 00:43
Yaamu wɔ kɔ ɛ
The mother will go

wɔ kɔna go
when she goes. 0:46

si wɔ weni wɔ, mballɛ hun
And she called her, lady come. 00:47

Hana gole wɔle bɔi
If she is Boi you said Boi

Si weini wɔ Boi oo
Then she called her Boi, oh

Peμu hun mballɛ Wole ɛɛ sege 0: 52.
she said thank you for coming

ya yema mu vuii la yegi mie
I really want you for my son.00:59

Yegi mui halɔ?
Which of your son? 01:02

mu wɔn be gbongi ilɛne
she told her the name

Joe ɛ cɛ cɛ we?
Is it Joe or Sooh? 1:04

Ya kɛɛ la balin ye
I accepted (the lady said)

wɔle yegi mie wɔ wɔle wɔle ya koala balin
she said my son wants you. she answered yes 1:06.0

igbẹn ẹn yo-o! cọn kẹgele hu, igbẹn ẹn, o. 1:08
in the old days, not just now, in the old days.
Emphasising the fact that these things take place only in the old days.

(Na di ol eg) krio, meaning old age
ọ igbẹn ẹn– kẹẹ
In the old days 1:11

si wọ can haa, si wọn bẹ koi Fee toon kẹenga si pẹns c sin mu hin
she took small amount about six pẹns or one cent after sitting awhile. 1:20

sin mu ii mbale bii wọ doma 1:22
talk to the young lady about love
doma = love

lāa doma la ya mu hẹ wọ la yegi miele o we.
I am proposing love to you for my son

hana ẹgo ọ wọ can wọ jẹn.
If she loves him 1:27

Na hana ẹgo ọ wama lāa wọ ọ can na ,wọn bẹ mamda
If the young lady likes him, lady laughs. 1:31

ọ wọ ẹna bẹ bii, wọ kẹ na
She came, received, and she went

ọ wọ na gon, feyẹ ọ wọ ọ wọ hu mat o-ọ
she will hide the money when she goes. 1:35.0

ọ wọ ce hun gbongi kala o-ọ
she will not give it to her mother. 01:37
JP says ‘kalaa’ means mother

wo hu matin gbán
she will hide the money secretly (from her mother)

se-e-e tɛnga si ƚɔŋɔ yen. 01:39
Until after two days time
si numa wo ƚon ɓe pei kɔ, mbalɛ ya mui komu yan
Then the woman (mother) went back, young lady, I have come again
01:43

gbasa hu wo yasu, kɛn ga si feyɛ sim mu kɛŋa sin tayen,
She gave her head tie, and money about one or two shillings. 01:46
gbasa = ‘headtie’

mbalɛ, lani yana hɔɔwe,
lady, this is in connection to what I have told you. 01:48

landa ya hunaa.
That's why I came.

wo hali, ihi, kɛŋa si wɔn ɓe wen nu lelan
She answered, Yes, perhaps she will call another person. 01:53

So mbalɛ, mbalɛ yana hɔ , yana ke wo yale yan còn wo jɛn layegi miɛ
So lady, I saw you and want you for my son, that is why I have come and
given the kola nut. 01:57

kɛ landa ya huna, yana hɔ wɔla
that is why I have come to talk about it

alla gbɛn, kɛ hama kɛ woni yɛn-o
this is for quiet a long time, but I have given her anything yet. 02:00
landa hun landa ya huna
that is why I have come .02:02

wɔni wɔn bɛ yii
he asked her if that is true?

wɔ hale ku ɔl wɔn kye
he said is it true

ɛɛ hana ke wɔ le hun a haa
yes, I saw what did they do. 01:07

Na yema la
Do you want it?

wɔ le a ɛ, ya yema yan cen gbiga kitti
She said she wanted but could not decide 2:13
(the people she is going to meet)

si yan yi ɛn, yapam ni yaam ɛn bɛ pɛm,
I can’t decide unless my father and mother do so

kɛi feye sin tayen si wɔ kɛ wɔ Masaa, si wɔ kɛ wɔ, kɛ wɔ
then Masaa gave her one or two shillings, 2:19

wɔn bɛ, a—a—a, wɔ bina hun gbo
after she had received it 2:21

hu gbo ce wɔn yasun kiniz, si wɔ kɔ hun gbongi kala wɔ
The money was kept by her, until she went and showed her mother
kiniŋ ‘all’

yem yoo numa wɛ wɔ hun kom yan
My mother, that woman came to me here. 2:27

\[\text{wɔ le wɔ yema mu la kajogɛ} \]
She said, she wants me for her son. 2:30

\[\text{Feyɛ hun wɔ kɛm ye hun yeni, gbasu hu yeni} \]
Look at the headtie and money she gave me

\[\text{kala wɔn bɛ hale} \]
Then her mother said,

\[\text{mam da yipa, mam da yipa!} \]
Don’t bring it here, don’t bring it here. 02:36
‘yipa’ means bring

\[\text{yeniy wɔn wɔ ha lani} \]
the reason why she did that 2:37

\[\text{lani wɔ cen kai o le kai masina lan gbo} \]
the woman was afraid, if her father did not know,

\[\text{si wɔn wɔ gbige kiti} \]
they should not decide. 2:41

\[\text{Nupoge sina la gbo hɔ ha wɔ sɔle ma ha wɔ singa} \]
the father will molest her if he knows. 2:46

\[\text{oo eɛ si nuwe wɛ wɔn bɛ mun.} \]
Then that person returned. 2:49.

\[\text{wɔn bɔ hun wɔ gon kɔn yɔn gi nupoge} \]
she came back after three days. 2:52

\[\text{wɔn bɛ hun wɔ gon kɔn yɔn gi nupoge} \]
she went straight to the man when she came. 2:55
Mbalɛ, ya ná hun komu yan, Mbalɛ, ya ná hun komu yan landa huni wei
young lady, I have come here to you, young lady, I have come here to you
2:59

wale uh
she said yes

la jɛnda la ya huna wɔ hale ihii.
I came for the problem.2:58

Kɛɛ nupogɛ tei lan o
The man heard but, 03:00

kɛ wɔ cen hɔ jɛn o jɛn.
but he did not say any thing. 3:03

ya na hun yan mbalɛ yana hun yan
I came to you young lady, I came to you

ɛ-ɛ, ya na hun yan, mbalɛ, ya na hun yan paagɛ
Yes, I came here young lady, I came here yesterday. 3:06

yen ya hun la wɔn wama yen, ya na hole yema wɔ la yegi miɛ, si la?
I came here for this young girl, I said that I want her for my boy son
do you know about that?

ɔɔ-oo, yan bɛ yama si lan.
I don’t know about it. 03:12

yan bɛ ya ma si lan wɛ.
No, I don’t know any thing about it.
kɛɛ wɔn bɛ wein kala wɔ wama yen kala wɔ.
Then she called her mother. the young lady’s mother. 03:16

Hɛɛ numa yen wɔ na hun komu yan
This woman came to you, she said

wɔle wɔ na ke likɛnin wahin yen, la kajogɛ.
she had seen a beautiful lady (your daughter) for her son. 03:25

Wɔ hale wɔ na hun yan lawɔn, yan wani yana ke wɔ vui yen ke yama si lan wɛ hu laa.
I saw her came but I don’t know anything about that. 3:28

ɔ wɛ hu, la ɛ yana teila
is that true, 03:30

ɛɛ, yana teila
eh, I heard about it

ɔ wɔ nakɛ wɔ ɣɛn
did she give her anything? 03:31

O yale wɔna ke
Oh yes I saw her
a le wana ke wamiɛ yen ni ɣɔgam feɛ ni gbassa ke ɣa si lan gbi. 3:37
I saw my daughter bring money and head tie to me but I don’t any thing about it.

Yan bɛ ɣama bɛn hun yoo cen tatɛn ɣɔ humu biye wamui wɛ
I did not touched it because she is your daughter. 3:41

Hum muwɔ gbiga kittiɛ
You are to pass decision on your daughter. 3:43.0
Then they called her.

The man called her (the daughter)

young lady, I saw somebody come he said.

she came here and said she wants you for her child

Did you know anything about it? she said yes. she said yes

I have not agreed to her proposal

even now you know

How is it do you want him? (for marriage)

O, she said she can’t decide by herself

I was not called there

Even now do you still want him?

An siɛ wɔ hi ye , wɔ hale ɛɛ.
Did you know him at all. she said yes

*Mu wɔ yema, wɔle εε,  4:10:0*
He said he wants you, she said yes.

*Ha wɔn bɛ biya nuwe wɔ yipɛ feye. 4:12*
They answered the woman who brought the money

*Woɔn bɛ mɔɔn wɔ gbo mgan ihoi ye ba kuje api. 4:16*
she went back feeling cold on her body.
(speaker means that the woman was quite happy as evident in the following line he said in english)

‘Back with happy’

*woɔn kɔn ye woɔ kɔla lema  4:20*
she went to tell

*Kapogɛ εɛ mba yegi hiye we Hole. 4:23:0*
Her man, (the husband) about their son’s woman

*yɔn gu akwe o ke kasicen hubatoge oo. 4:26:0*
that she thank God (that she went there

*waama laa wɔ ya ke ye. 4:28:0*
The young lady that I have seen

*kaala wɔ vui, kai wɔ vui lawɔ la poina mujan. 4:31:0*
Even mother felt very happy about the issue

*Ha go can loɔɛ kpele si ha tumape fei ha gon tuna feye lela yenı fee ye hu han kui.  4:34:0*
We will go and sit for a long time looking for money, this time the money is plenty.
(they need to work hard to get the money needed for the lady)

Kɛ masein mawɛ fee yɛ nage gbo toon. 4:40:0
but first money is small for the marriage programme
He is saying that the money needed for marriage programmes in the old
days was pretty small as compared to now.

Tɛnga ha gbo yipi sɔŋɔ male ta sin waan 4:42:3
Perhaps they will only bring ten shillings

Ni muima tɛnga bosí gu mu. 4:44:0
Sometimes with fresh palm wine about a gourd.

Siha hun siha han, sìgi wɔn pia suwɛ. 4:51:0
Then they will come and tie rope on her hand. (to engage her)
‘sek’ also to tie.

wɔn pia suwɛ kpu–u–u. 4:54:0
they will give shake hand right round

ii yen hu kɔi ga mui? 4:57:0
what brought you here? Why do you give shake hands.

cen jɛnda lelan hu wa, wa yana ke likɛnin yan. 5:00:0
Nothing other than I have found a beautiful thing (lady) with you

ɛɛɛ le ya yeğimie ɛɛ sì wɔn bɛ wein. 5:04:0
Eh, it is for my son, that we have gathered here

Nupogɛ wɔ wɔn bɛ wein aa kawɛ ha digini. 5:07
It is the man (husband to be ) who has called the family

ɔ wɛɛ ye cani anuma yen wɔ hunla. 5:11:0
Explain what she has come for.
Si haa yi yɛ wɔ, wɔ hu laa
They asked is that so

wɔle ɛɛ
she said yes

han bɛ Wein wama laa ni yi ke numa yen wɔ huni kohi yan la hun hu laa.5:17.2
then they called the young young lady, we saw the woman came, how is it?

wɔle ɛɛ, yana ke wɔ ee
yes I saw him

Kɛ labɛ ile la nya
Even now how is it?

ɔɔɔ la jɛn wɔ ha le ɛɛ i yema wɔ le ɛɛ. 5:25
Do you want him or love him. She said yes

Si wamala kenyà wɔ wɔnbɛ hɔ yan ya cen yom mun o
Then the lady’s uncle said he is not going to agree. 05:29

Yan cen yomun o
I did not agree. 05:32

Wamiɛ wɔnama ken madum
The daughter lack respect
Madum=disrespect

Le yagon hɔwɛ
That is what I am saying. 05:35

Feyɛ hun wɔ yahan
money should come. 05:37
The relatives of the lady will come up with various faults to get money from the other party. One way the speaker mentioned was saying that the lady is disrespectful. Others will say our daughter steals, can wet bed etc.

People went through the house to the back. 05:40

She gives money to one person to come and beg

Give the money to this person he is right. 05:45

Probably he will agree. 05:48

Yes he will agree

Then they said to the lady

Did you tell man woman about our son. 05:55

we have accepted but as it is we have to tell all the family. 06:00

it will be on a time we will all gather. 06:05
then she went and say to the others. 06:07

that is those days not now.06:09

when she went she will come back with the man. 06:14

they( parents) want the woman, man and three or four people .06:20

they will gather then we will also gather

when they come back again. 06:24

the people came

then they put the word before them. 06:29

they asked what is here (how are people doing). 06:31

there is hunger and other things (other social problems)

despite the hunger and others we say thanks to God

Le gbomi yeni
That we met here. 06:37
Gbom = meet

Mun bɛ pɛi, han bɛ pɛi wɔn pia la pia gusu gɔi
Then they requested for hand shake. 06:40

yɔngi naleye tɛnga waa hun
you left about ten . 06:43

mu bɛ wɔ pia suwɛ wɛ kinin
then you would have made a shake hand for all.

I ken wɛwɛ i piasuwɛ wɔ han wɛ yeni.
We have seen all the shake hands you have made. 06:47

Hawɛ la halɔn?
It is for who?

wɔ hale la waima yen
she said it is for this young girl

mbalɛ wɔ hun la ya lemu
young girl I refer the matter to you. 06:51

Le wɔ hanle wɔ yema mu, hun la?
They said they want you, how is it?

So jɛnda kitti la gon ye o
So that is a short matter now. 06:58

Ha wɔn bɛ pɛi sigi, gu bangi wɔn pia.
Then they tied a rope on hand. 07:01
(this is the traditional way of engaging a girl)

I sɛnta hun fe
Big money comes

Si a gbige ga
They cut it (the rope). 07:07

Si han bɛ bi litɛmба
They told her about love

Si agbɛna bɛ habi hapɛ litɛmба
They told the parents that they love them. 07:11

Lande la lanɛ laleyɛ lon kinin
There is something left behind. 07:15

Hana cole mɛnde mui a nui hale mboya
In mende they call it ‘mboya’ offer. 07:20

yɔn gi nalelɛ tɛŋima pɔn mu
where you left, something like one pound. 07:23
(you still have like one pound more left)

humu kɔile, mula bɛ pe cui bon
those of you who have gone to hang heads . 07 :30

kɔnɛ, kuwɔn humu yɔgi gumɔn
please do the right thing 07:32

ya oo agbɛnan
please my people.

Hakem ansa hee,
Give me answer

ya biɛ janga talan
I have the responsibility ( I m going to take care). 07:35
La ni kɔla balinɛ
That was why we went to go and hang heads

Fe hin mu ɛwɔhin kɛnga sinta raa
The money is left will be like three shillings

Si han bɛ yomun
Then they agreed or answered. 07:40

Mu bɛ ɛwɔn fe, lilagon yenĩ
Then you will you will have to pay another money here

Numa yen liya hun la wɔɔni
This woman that I am coming for. 07:45

Han gbongi hin nu, wɔ cen yin tayen
You should show us a go between (mediator). 07:47
There is always what we call a ‘sababu’ a go- between, in the event of disputes between husban and wife, suh a person or persons mediate (s)

Yegipogɛ ni numa
Man and woman

Yi lan bɛ leya agbɛni
Then we refer the matter to the parents

Han bɛ han bɛ kɔ cugbon
They also went to hang heads. 07:52

Hale yegipogɛ wɔle komni guɛ
The father is the father– in – law

Wamala wɔle kalajɛn ɔɛ
The woman is the mother–in–law. 07:57
Muhan can hapiasu muhan bɛ kɛfe
You will join hands with them and give the money

Kumba ni kota
Clothes and lappa (a piece of cloth). 08:01

Mun bɛ wɔ fesant
Then you will pay plenty money

Han bɛ hɔ hale yi kɔla balin
Then they say we agree. 08:06

Lela bon yeni yipi fesant ɛ
As it is now, you should bring a lot of money. 08:10

Oo han bɛ gɔ cuagbon
Oh they went to hang heads again

Hanago yɔgo hu sinna go ya kɔla balin kinin
They will only agree when you give the remaining money. 08:16

Le a pɛm kɔn cuagbon kɛ ha kɛm lɔɡɔ
we are going to hang heads but you have to give me time

lɔɡɔ sina kɛ lani gbi yɛn
it is a long time but any how.08:21.

numa wɔ yi hun ceyɛ
the woman will come ahead

mupɛ wɔn fe
you will pay (money to collect the woman). 08:25
they said it is true

the woman will come after three days. 08:32

people will take or come with her when she is ready

somebody will take her when she is ready

you will cook a lot of rice and go with it. 08:36

where you are going

you will also meet them cooked their food before you. 08:40

That is all

they will take the woman. 08:44

they will request for something when they go. 08:49

the town where they are taking her. 08:51

they will ask for a woman
I yema le nugbɛn
We want an old woman. 08:55

wɔ numa yen wɔyi hin pia asu
the woman we will hand over the lady to. 08:57

le han gbale han
for those in the house

si haa gbo hɔ hin
they show them all. 09:00

so a gbɔŋɛ nago gbo ha ɔɛ wɔnum piasu
you will give some money during handing over. 09:03

kɛŋa si mu c sinta tayen
probably one or two shillings. 09:05

numa yen wo yi mu kɛɛ
this is the woman we are giving you

muugin yin cenyan
we returned, because we can’t stay. 09:10
humulayi, humulayan la yen
you are going to be our representative

wɔ wo yipɛ kinin
that’s all we brought. 09:14

ce wo ken koogo layin o we
please look after her. 09:17

so la yin we hale kuwɔn kɛɛ
that will be true, they said. 09:20
si haye pɛ sɛm
then we all dispatched

wɛ kini hunla we wɛ
that is all. 09:25