

13 Mar 09, tc: inspected, renamed "A07 Tommy Lahai and Tommy Jabba banter"

topics: children, marital relations

Interview date: 2 May 08

File name: A07 TL conversation

Transcriber: HS

Transcription consultants: Fasia Kolia and Joe Peku.

Notes: There are a lot of parts of this recording that are hard to make out, and my hard-copy transcriptions often yield several different versions of a line, none of which seems to correspond to the recording. I suspect the last part is the men talking about me, in fact, though I'm not completely sure, and whether I am their wife, and will give them money, etc. I'm not surprised, since Atɔ Moiwo is involved and he likes to push interviews and conversations in this direction. Because of the choppiness of the transcription, I peetered out at the end.

Not a lot of new vocabulary here; the interesting thing about this and other TL/TJ texts is the easy bantering style the two men use with each other.

Tj: ε, Lahai. Yini hum yin ɬkínín, apuma teenteeni ha yi ale.

Eh, Lahai. You and I, we all, the small-small children are underneath us.

Ha hum si lɛn? Ha lɛ yɛn kɛnɛŋ?

Do they know how to greet you? Do they greet well?

**lɛn** = to greet.

TL: Apum kpɛlɛ oo, ha yi si lɛn.

All the children, oh, they know how to greet us.

Kɛ apum ha lɔ, ha ha fitiya yin yaswaan.

But there are some children who do us disrespect.

fitiya = disrespect. Mende. JP: means “High-footed,” which means ‘disrespectful.’ I also had written kisa for this word.

Han lo mu ke yen vuí, si gun,  
They look at you there very much, and remain (silent),

si mun pẽmbẽ yema ke gi tahun.  
if you also want to see with an eye.

A few very different versions of this line in my notes; alternative to the above is from JP: “si mun pẽmbẽ yeman le wo ke mu tahun.” He gave: ‘He will never want to set eye on you.’

Mu paa ke hani wɔni, ha poyẽ.  
You just see, you and he, you grew up (together).  
I.e., it appears from the amount of respect the child gives that he is actually your age-equal/peer.

Ke apum ha lo, ha si yi vuí, bẽẽ,  
But there are some children, who know us very well, man.

mu le, ‘yema yen, pẽmbẽ pẽinyẽ.’  
you say, ‘this boy, wow.’  
pẽmbẽ pẽinyẽ = apparently expression of approval here; usually used for emphasis of some sort.

Wɔn wo si teli nuu kengen.  
As for him, he knows how to talk to a person.

Ke anina/apuma apum ha ma sin teli nuu kengen.  
But the other children don’t know how to talk to a person.

Ha yi komiyẽ vui yan.  
They are what we gave birth to a lot here.

[END DISCUSSION. OTHERS PROMPT TJ TO ASK TL ANOTHER QUESTION.]

TJ: ε, κε– le mu há pantimɔi.  
Eh, but–when you do work.

Mu ceyε si han kɔmɔ kɔ,  
you stay then they come

mu há le, bæε, ya mu beman,  
you tell them, ‘Man, I call you (to assist),’  
**beman** = ‘to call to assist with work.’ JP

Ma ce pɛn vuí!  
Don’t do it again!  
Unclear meaning of this.

Ha ce gbɔ!  
They’re unable.

Ma lɔ hɔ, ma bæ kwi kɔpwε yen,  
Except for saying, without taking this money,

vuí wɔ ce, han, han– han– ha na ge cen kwɛi, cen kwɛi.  
he just stays, they– they are not going to walk, they don’t walk.

Hun yipε vuí.  
It finishes completely.  
I.e., the idea is over.

Yi munbε vuí lan.  
? Not transcribed in my notes.

Κε ha na cani gun,  
But they stay sitting,

[TJ, in Mende: Wa suwando, hiyε?]

Disobedient, huh?

εε, ha cani gun, yin, yi cen wei yēsita ta sina sina yen.  
Yes, they stay sitting, we don't wear long-long pants.

Han, ha ha ta wei.  
As for them, they wear them.

Ha ta wei, ta vuí ɓ, jújúŋ.  
They wear them, really very long there.  
jújúŋ = id. to be long (pants).

TJ: ε- κε lan siye we.  
Eh- but knowing that.

Mu κε sɔmma, mu wɔ κε?  
Do you give food, do you give it to him?

TL: εε, βεε, han ha mu há. Han ha mu há.  
Yes, man, it is they who do (work) for you. It is they who do (work) for you.

Han ha mu há, ta mu ké.  
They do work for you, so you give (them food).

TJ: Ya ce mun κε!  
I won't give to you!

TL (laughing): εε, Bɔkai, jɔp hu win.  
Eh, Bokarie, that's a lie.

TJ: Yanβε, ya ce mun κε!  
Myself, I won't give to you!

TL (laughing): Jɔp huwin, humβε!

It's a lie, you too!

'Humbɛ', 'you yourself,' like Mende 'bia bɛ', is used as a rebuke (either gentle/joking or fierce): "Oh, *you*."

[Either another person present or TL; unclear]: Wɔ wɔ kɛ, wɔ wɔ kɛ,  
He will give him, he will give him,

TL: Si kaalaa wɛ ɔ,  
If his wife is there,

si ma kɛ wɔnbɛ, kaalaa wɔ wɔ kɛ.  
if he himself doesn't give, the wife, she will give him.

[T] or another person]: Le mu kɛ wɛ,  
When you give,

Le mu kɛ a jɛnɛ, wɔ cen kɛ a jɛnɛ.  
When you give to heaven, he won't give to heaven.  
?, jɛnɛ = heaven < Arabic janna, 'heaven.'

TL: Humbɛ, bɛɛ, Hɔbatugɛ hun wɔ nda, hu mu la teliyɛ.  
You yourself, man, it is God who's there, who is talking to you.  
Underlined parts are hard to make out.

Hɔbatugɛ wɔ lan síyɛ.  
It is God who knows.

TJ: Kɛ- yɛ mu hín laniyɛ wɛ?  
But- who laid that there for you?

Bɔgɛ mui yegá le, yɛ mu huni?  
for the building of your house, who came to you?

TL: ɛ, ɔ wɔnbɛ híni.  
Yes, it's there that he is lying.

TJ: Yinbɛ, laa mu wɔ̌ topi!  
We ourselves, your wife, she will drive (him)!

TL: Mm, ya ce wɔ̌ topi pɛiŋ.  
No, I won't drive him at all.

La yaŋ vuí, yɛŋ, ya ya kom wɛ,  
For me truly, the thing is, it was I who bore him,

manbɛ ha le ya ce wɔ̌n topi.  
they said I shouldn't drive him.

Puga nuu ce lɔn.  
There's no man.

Kɛ kaalaa wɔ̌ hɔ̌ lani wɛ  
But the wife said it to him

La hɔ̌ vuí, kaalaa mɔ̌ topi,  
To say a lot, the wife drives him,

kaalaa la han gun yeni,  
the wife stays here,

kaalaa munbɛ ha le,  
the wife tells you,

wɔ̌n wɔ̌ ce ha wɔ̌ gbun ale.  
he is there under the roof.

Ha pɛm go pɛiŋ ha lɔ̌ kwiye.  
The foregoing section about driving someone from the house and the wife's opinion is unclear, and what the transcribers told me seems still different from the recording.

[Pause in conversation.]

TL: Hɔbatu.

God.

TJ: Le ya hɔ/hun, ya go gbungi jɛnda mu yɔngu bɛɛyɛ.  
When I speak/come, I will show your issue to the chiefs.  
hun written. I.e., I will summon you before the chiefs.

TL: Mu go gbungi jɛnda, hiyɛ? [TJ: ɛɛ]  
You'll show the issue, huh?

La hum pɛi paa kaalaa mu pɛi go gbahun.  
For you to [unintelligible] your wife is in the house.  
fast speech; hard to understand

TJ: Ya ce wɔn puti gbusum! [TL laughs]  
I won't puti gbusum!

TL: Hun na pɛi kwi mɔɔ!  
It takes more!  
mɔɔ = more. From English.

Atɔ Moiwo: Hu mu há? (TL: Hm?)  
What will you do? (TL: Huh?)

AT: Hu mu há, hum mu biyɛ numa le wɛ?  
What will you do, to get that woman.

TL: ɛɛ, Hum mu bí numa yen.  
Yes, it's you who have this woman.

Cen yugi mui wɔ ha mu jɛn?  
Wouldn't she bring you and do something to you?

TJ: Wɔ́ mú jɛnda, i kaalaa mu kwɛilɪŋ?  
She does something, behind your wife's back?  
Or: and become your wife afterward?

TL: Hum mu yipɛ jɛnda wɛ pɛi, hɔmui!  
It was you who brought this thing again, this palaver!

[Both men laugh]

TL: Wɔ́ go dugi hɔmui.  
He was starting the palaver.  
**duge** = fall; seems to mean 'start' with hɔmui, 'speech/palaver.'

TJ: Mu ɔ́ ɔ́ŋ ta pia anɔn.  
You put your hands in it.

TL: Mu ɔ́ ɔ́ŋ ta pia.  
You put your hands in.

Kaalaa mu, kaalaa mu wɔ́ mu gbɔnda vuí.  
Your wife, your wife pressed you a lot.  
**gbɔnda** = press. JP. I'm skeptical about this glossing...

Wɔ́ mu ɔ́ ʒɔti vuí.  
She truly stopped (the matter) with you.

TJ: Wɔ́ kaalaa mu.  
She's your wife.

Kaalaa mu wɔ́ mu kɛ kɔpwɛ, hiyɛ? (TL: ɛ-ɛ!)  
Your wife gives you money, right? (TL: No!

ɛ, nuu mu kɛ.  
A person gives to you.



TJ: Mu kwí pɔgita anɔn gbɔsigwa anɔn? (TL: εε.)  
You take in the pockets [unclear]? (Yes.)  
gbɔsigwa ??

TJ: La yaŋ vuí yen.  
For me, truly.

END SEGMENT