READINGS IN SANGO

Volume 2
Basic Course in Sango

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CONTENTS

Introduction

Readings

1. Missing front teeth
2. Funeral dances
3. Teasing a foolish child
4. A choosy father-in-law
5. The disobedient sister
6. The rat and the mouse
7. Guarding a corn field
8. The helicopter's arrival
9. Highwaymen on the road to Bangui
10. A vacation episode
11. Making a living
12. Threatened by a young buffalo
13. When I was a child
14. Deceived by a woman
15. Murder of a lover
INTRODUCTION

The following 15 texts are meant to be an integral part of the language learning material; they do not constitute a mere appendix to the graded lessons. They should be used as early as possible to increase the student's familiarity with the grammar, vocabulary and syntax of Sango. The English translation is provided to encourage this use. The following are some ways that the texts can be used.

1. Listen to the original tape-recordings of these texts to test one's comprehension and to practise mimicry of narrative style.

2. Translate as much of a text as one can alone and then check the translation with the one provided here.

3. Have Centralafricans retell each text to obtain more texts and to obtain variations in narrative style.

4. Students, or students and Centralafricans, can ask each other questions about the content of the texts. Centralafricans can also be asked for explanations and cultural information.

5. The texts should be retold as often as possible to gain fluency in speaking Sango uninterruptedly for several minutes at a time.

6. Members of a class can cooperate in the preparation
of a dictionary to better come to grips with the differences between Sango and English idiom.

Because these texts were given extemporaneously, they are sometimes a little disorganized, but perhaps not more so than man-on-the-street interviews in our own society. It is not always easy to determine what string of words constitutes a sentence. In some cases I have indicated other possibilities in the Notes. The texts are also sometimes not as interesting as one would have wished because of the tendency to ramble on the part of the speaker. The fables are especially disappointing. One hardly gets the point of a few of the stories because they are so abbreviated. It should be noted, however, that even in the native language of the speakers there appears to be little of the kind of style and eloquence that makes a sample of folklore good reading. I have yet to record a Gbeya fable that did not need a commentary to make it even intelligible. Besides, folklore does not appear to be told with the same zest in Sango as it is in the native languages. To my knowledge there is no folklore indigenous to Sango as a lingua franca, except for some dance songs.

These texts represent three categories: A for material primarily ethnological in nature; F for fables or other traditional folklore; and N for narratives of a more personal nature. The original code numbers are given so
as to relate them to other work on the language. Some of these texts were used by Taber (1966) and myself (1966), but for different purposes: In the latter publication the readings are entirely different.

The texts were selected from the very large collection of tape-recordings made in 1962 for the grammar project. They were chosen on the basis of the quality of the recording and the content and length of the text itself; short texts were preferred over the long ones. These considerations had priority over factors such as age, sex, and ethnic and social background of the speaker. Although these were originally to have been used as criteria in selecting the texts, it was decided that the student's task of learning the language was more important than providing a wide spectrum of Sango readings. Nevertheless, there is an adequate representation, although there may be a few more Protestant speakers than one would have planned for. Seven people participated in the selection at various stages of the editing, among whom were four Centralafricans.

The tape-recordings themselves have not been edited. The transcription, on the other hand, is edited to the extent that the spelling has been standardized and that some material has been deleted; the latter is indicated by (....).
Missing Front Teeth (A9)

1 Na kótóró tì mbi, áita, pémbé tì mbi só f bâa amanquer só aksa séngé pepe.

2 Na kótóró tì mbi, mbéni dôôdô aksa. Êré ni lenge.

4 Tongana ámërenge wâle, âla mú mbéni mërenge òko, amú lenge àzìa na li tì lo awe, âni commencer tì dô lenge só.

5 Mbéni biá ni aksa. 6 Ala sâra biá ni ngbii, agà asi na ndô tì mo. 7 Tongana mo zi pémbé tì mo sì mo lungûla pepe, zo tì lenge nî apíka li tì mo. 8 Même, mo mú téré tì f koè, f lângó na da tì lenge nî òko, âré gi mo, atene mo lôndô, mo kânga yângâ tì da. 9 Ngbangati pémbé tì mo angbá na kângângâ nî só. 10 Mo laâ, mo kânga yângâ tì da. 11 Sô aksa hé mbi lá koè. 12 Tongasô, mbi lungûla pémbé tì mbi.

13 Na kótóró tì mbi, âni eks dô lenge. 14 Mara tì dôôdô ndé ndé ndé na kótóró tì mbi. 15 Tongana âni toro lenge awe, na l'heure tì dôux heûres, âni sàra koa na âmâmâ tì âni ngbii, na l'heure tì dôux heûres awe, âni bôngbi tì dô lenge. 16 Mamâ tì lenge nî só aksa dô lenge nî só, vënì tì lenge nî, lo tè kôbè mingi pepe. 17 Ngbangati yâ tì lo. 18 Angbá tongasô sì lo eks dô na dôôdô nzonî. 19 Amû na lo kôbè mingi pepe. 20 Quand-même ngû, amû na lo gi na ouillère. 21 Lo yô ngû mingi pepe.
In my village, friends, these teeth which are missing here are not for nothing.

In my village there's a dance. Its name is lenge. Girls choose one of their number and when they have placed a necklace on her neck, we begin to dance this lenge. There's a song (which accompanies the dance). They sing the song and come to you. If you have not had your teeth removed, the lenge girl taps your head. If you take all of us here (gathered together) and we slept in the lenge girl's house, they would call on you alone saying, "Get up, shut the door. It's because your teeth are still intact. You there, shut the door."

This was always making me a butt of ridicule. So I took out my teeth.

In our village we dance the lenge. There are different kinds of dances in my village. After we have strung the beads, around two o'clock (in the afternoon), after we have worked for our mothers, at two o'clock, we
gather to dance the lenge. 16 The leader of the lenge, the proprietor of the lenge, she doesn't eat very much. 17 Because of her stomach. 18 It stays as it is so that she can dance well. 19 They don't give her much food. 20 Even water is given her by the spoonful. 21 She doesn't drink much. 22 So after we have gathered to dance the lenge, they beat the drum. 23 We sing the song. 24 The lenge drum beat in my village, that's how they beat it. 25 So I saw this and since it attracted me, I ruined my teeth. 26 Friends, please don't make fun of my teeth.

Notes

1. I -- The speaker uses this pronoun to mean 'you (plural)' as in her own language (Yakoma) or as used by Protestant missionaries. The latter is more likely, because she also uses ani (sentence 4). séngé pepe -- A sentence in the negative with séngé is often used to introduce an explanation: for example, Lo goe na France séngé ape, Lo goe ti báa Générale de Gaulle. 'He didn't go to France without a reason; he went to see General de Gaulle'.

2. mbéní ... ake -- This kind of construction is almost formulaic in the opening part of a discourse. If one wanted to talk about a friend who was studying in Paris, he would begin by saying: Mbéní ita ti mbi ake. Lo ake sára l'école na Paris.
4. **tongana** — Since ámérangé wále, repeated in ála, is the subject of mú, **tongana** introduces the whole clause. On the other hand, perhaps this first phrase is to be taken as 'as for girls'.

6. **sára bía = he bía**.

7. **zí** — This verb and lungúla are synonymous here. It is unclear why both are used.

8. **lángó ... óko 'we sleep together', da tí lenge** — Probably a special hut made for the occasion.

9. This and the following clause may be a part of the preceding sentence. **kángángó** — Nominalization of kánga 'to shut'. The occurrence of this verb in the very next sentence is undoubtedly accidental.

11. **hé** — With an object, 'to laugh at, ridicule'. In other contexts it means simply 'to laugh'.

12. **lungúla** — That is, she had the teeth removed by someone else.

14. This whole phrase can be taken as the subject of an omitted éke.

15. **toro** — This does not appear to be a Sango word, but it seems to have the meaning 'to string'.

16. **vení** — The adult (perhaps elderly) woman is owner of the lenge probably because she has the right to initiate the ceremonies and dispense certain privileges. However, her authority may be temporary; in this case she may be acting as master of ceremonies. Both uses
occur in the Gbaya language where the equivalent of *venif* is *wan*.

17. This may be a part of the preceding sentence.

20. *quand-même* — Used in the same way as *même* in 8. This use with a noun is common in Sango; perhaps it has the same meaning as *tongana* with a noun in this context.

Questions

1. Èré tì dódó nì aëke yë.
2. Ala zïa lenge nì na nïo wa.
3. Tongana mo lungúla pémbé tì mo ape, zo tì lenge nì asára yë na mo.
4. Aëke ngbanga tì mo tì kânga yângâ tì da ngbangatì yë.
5. Ala bôngbi tì dò dódó nì na l'heure yë.
6. Mamâ tì lenge nì ate kôbe ape ngbangatì yë.
7. Ala mú ngû na mamâ tì lenge nì na yë.

Model Sentences

1. Marâ tì dódó nàdë ndë na kòtòrò tì mbi (14)
'There are different kinds of dances in my village'.

2. I sàra koa ngbii, i bôngbi tì dò dódó (15)
'We work for a while, then we gather to dance'.
3. Angbá tongaso sí lo ke dó na dódó nzoni  (18)
'It stays like this so she can dance well'.

4. Ala hé pěmbé tí mbi apé o (26) 'Please don't make fun of my teeth'.

5. Mbi báa yô só, anzere na mbi awe, sí mbi buba pěmbé tí mbi (25) 'I saw this and since it attracted me I ruined my teeth.'
TWO

Funeral Dances (A21)

1 Dódó só i eke do ou bien téré tì mbéni zo tì mo aso lo ngbii1, lo kúl awe, et puis mo eke nga na kótóró ape, mo gà, téné ni aso mo, mo toto. 2 Et puis, mo hînga malin ni ape, sí mo sâra samba, ou bien tongana duma. 3 Et puis mo éré òzo, titene ála gà atoto lo na mo. 4 Zo kôs, même âmêrango, zo wa, zo só bé tì lo ayî, lo gà. 5 Zo só bé tì lo ayî ape, lo ngbâ yì tì lo. 6 Et puis ala gà. 7 Et puis asi na téré tì dodo ni awe, amú ngo, amú ngo tì 1, aëksa. 8 Asâra mbéni dû. 9 Et puis, ngo ni aëke gi osiî. 10 Si asâra mbéni dû, azía ngo ni na bé ni, si acommencer tì pîka. 11 Âmêrango agà mingi, ahé bîa, mbali. 12 Éré tì dodo ni laâ, mbali. 13 Et puis ahé bîa, acommencer tì sâra ngiâ tì hé bîa. 14 Et puis âkotâ zo amâ awe, agà na téré tì dodo ni, titene, et puis, agà, atoto nga kôs só quoi na ìta tì 1. 15 Et puis titene ngonzo akâi na bé tì lo. 16 Si ndà ni laâ, âzo aëke gà mingi titene a-âider lo ngâ na yà tì mawa tì lo.

Translation

1 Dances which we dance, when one of your relatives is sick for a long time and he has died and you are not
in the village (that is, when it happened), you come and it grieves you, so you cry. 2 You don't know what to do, so you make beer or else mead. 2 And you call people to come to mourn him for you. 4 Everybody, even children, no matter who the person may be, whoever wants to, comes. 5 Whoever doesn't want to, stays where he is.

6 So they come. 7 When they have come to the dance, they take a drum, take our drums and get things ready. 8 They make a hole. 9 There are four drums. 10 So they make a hole and put the drums over it, and begin to play (them). 11 Many children come and sing the mbali song. 12 That's the name of the dance, the mbali. 13 They sing and begin to have a good time, to sing. 14 When the adults have heard, they come to the dance to mourn the death for our brother (who has died). 15 So that his heart will not grieve. 16 That's why many people come, to help him during his misfortune.

Notes

1. The "relative clause" at the beginning here does not seem to be grammatically linked to what follows. It may be the title of the narrative, or it may be a fragment of a whole sentence that was cut off. ou bien —. This expression is sometimes used in Sango with the same function that it has in French; here it seems to mean
nothing. The whole account is characterized by some French phrases used meaninglessly. zo tí mo — In certain contexts this is a synonym of famille; one more readily says lo eke famille tí mbi than lo eke zo tí mbi in speaking of a person nearby or recently referred to. nga — No satisfactory explanation has yet been found to account for all occurrences of postverbal nga. Sometimes it retains its meaning of 'also'; sometimes it has the meaning 'even'; but here and in 14 some other meaning is intended. mo eke ... mo toto — Stringing along clauses like this without connectives (that is paratactically) is characteristic of Sango.

2. malin — This expression should not be confused with sára malin which means 'to use guile, be deceptive'. Perhaps the speaker means to say manière; its Sango pronunciation is similar to that of maye, a Sango word (although apparently Lingala in origin), which is similar to malin (pronounced malée) in meaning. ou bien — wala could have been used. tongana — By taking out the meaning 'or' and putting duma in the place of samba we get the verb phrase sára tongana duma. In this position tongana can have neither the meaning 'when' nor 'like', but it may add a meaning of 'possibility' to the whole verb phrase. The clause may then be translated 'You might make some mead'. There are enough documented occurrences of tongana used in this way to indicate that it is
grammatical, but not enough to make one sure what its function is.

3. éré ázo ... atoto -- More simply said éré ázo tí toto lo.

4. More or less literally: 'Everybody, even children, anybody, the person whose heart wants to, comes'.
 zo wa -- This expression gets the meaning 'whoever' when it occurs in a list.

7. téré tí dódó -- na dódó could also have been used, but the expression here more specifically refers to the group assembled for dancing.

14. et puis -- The first occurrence is that of a connective, acting like sí, but the second has no function whatsoever; this is also true of 15.

15. Perhaps this clause should be appended to the preceding one: agá, atoto koa ... títene ngonzo akái 'they come to mourn so that grief will die down'.
 ngonzo -- Ordinarily this word means 'anger'. Here it refers to the sorrow that the person experiences in being in a situation of mawa (next sentence). More than sorrow is experienced; Centralafricans react to death differently from us. Death is a humiliation because nonrelatives use sickness and death as an excuse for ridiculing one's family and enjoying its misfortune. Some of this shame is removed when the mourners are numerous and there is much to eat and drink. In such a situation one can say
"āla lungúla kamélá na lé tī mbi 'they removed my humiliation'.

Questions

1. Tenetí yë zo aéré ázo na téré tī dódó ni.
2. Zo wa sī alíngbi ga na téré tī dódó ni.
3. Ala zía ngo ni na ndo wa.
4. Éré tī dódó ni aške yë.
5. Tenetí yë ázo ni atoto kšá ni.

Model Sentences

1. Téré tī mbéni zo tī mo aso lo (1) 'One of your relatives is sick'.
2. Mo éré ázo titene álā gā atoto lo na mo (3) 'You call people to come and mourn him for you'.
3. Zo sò bé tī lo aví apei, lo ngehá yí tī lo (5) 'Whoever doesn't want to stays where he is'.
4. Ala sī na téré tī dódó ni awe, amū ngo, aške (7) 'When they have arrived at the dance, they take drums and get them ready'.
5. Nā ni laā, ázo aške gá míngi (16) 'That's why many people come'.

Teasing a Foolish Child (F21)

1 So ake mbéni kété histoire. 2 Ake tongana parabole tì kótóró giriri. 3 Mais ake taa parabole bíaní pepe. 4 Tenetí ake yi só asára na pópó tì ázo. 5 Ake mbéni hånda títene só ázo ake hånda amérengé na ní.

6 Giriri álá tene, mbéni ndeke ake. 7 A la dé éré tì lo, só ake na yàngá tì Sara Madjingay, atene koro. 8 Tongasó, álá tene, ndeke só ake na póró tì pendere míngi. 9 Póró tì lo ake pendere míngi. 10 Tongasó, tenetí lâ ní ká giriri amérengé ake kángg póró na ngbundá tì álá. 11 Na tongana mbéni lâ só, lâ asú ngangó míngi. 12 Na lâ achauffer na sóse ngangó míngi awe, tongana ázo kée abóngbi na gbé dé tì kéké na yá tì kótóró ndé ndé awe, na ayí tì hånda amérengé só lè tì álá ake tongana búbá. 13 Tongaso mbéni óko atene na méréngé, atene, à, méréngé tì mbi, mo báa, ázo agá na póró tì koro só na ndo só, ake pendere míngi. 14 Na mbi yi tì vo na mo, mais mo ake pepe. 15 Tongasó mo báa, álá hó na ní fadé fadé, ake goe na ní na gbé dé só ká, tenetí álá língbi tì vo na ñtà tì mo ká. 16 Tongasó, tongana mo yi, mo kpé fadé fadé, mo éré álá na ní, álá gá na ní, fadé mbi vo na mo.
17 Tongasó mérengu akpé ngangó míngi na lá só.
18 Lo sì ká, ahúnda ákótá zo só adutí ká, atene, ála
tene na mbi, atene, ála gá na póró tí koro na ndo só,
ake na ndo wa. 19 Tongasó ákótá zo só ni ahínga ká awe,
ake téné tí hánda. 20 Tongasó, ála tene, á, mérengu tí
mbi, mo báa, ála hó na ni fadé fadé na pekó tí da ká.
21 Ala eke goe na ni na gbé dé ká. 22 Tongasó mo kpé
fadé míngi, fadé mo wara ála na lége.
23 Na mérengu só akpé jisqu’à asi na mbéni da ká,
awara ázo. 24 Atene, á, mais póró tí koro só ála gá na
ni na ndo só fadé fadé aké na ndo wa. 25 Atene, ála
hó gi fadé fadé na ndo só. 26 Mo tomba ála, fadé mo
wara ála.
27 Na álá eke hánda mérengu só tí kpé na lé tí lá só,
jisqu’à lá azó lo. 28 Jisqu’à sì tongana zo só andóé lo
awe atene, mérengu tí mbi, mo hú téré tí mo, só ake
téné tí hánda sengé. 29 Mais mérengu ní ahínga kózo ní
pepe, tongana mà’ atene, ake yi tí nzoní míngi na ake
póró tí nzoní míngi. 30 Tongasó bê tí lo adó ngangó
míngi. 31 Lo yi tí wara yi ní, mais lo tomba gi pupu
sengé, jisqu’à lá azó lo, sì tongana zo só andóé lo awe
afa na lo ndá tí téné ní, atene, álá eke hánda mo tenétí
lá azó mo sengé. 32 Na ndá ní, mérengu só akíri.
33 Na téné só ake téné tí kótoró.
This is a short story. It is like a village parable from long ago. But it is not a real parable. Because it is something which actually took place among people. It is a kind of trick with which people deceived their children.

Long ago they said that there was a bird. It is called in the Sara Madjingay language koro. They said that this bird had a very nice skin. Its skin was very pretty. Because in those days long ago children used to tie skins to their waists. On one of those days, the sun shone very hard. When the sun had made the ground hot and when people had gathered in the shade of trees in different villages, they would set out to deceive the foolish children. So one of the adults says, "My child, a koro skin was brought here; it's very pretty. I wanted to buy it for you, but you weren't around. They took it away and went off to that shade over there just a while ago to sell it to one of your buddies. So if you want it, run and call them back with it, and I'll buy it for you."

So then the child ran fast. Arriving there he asked the old men sitting there, "I have been told that a koro skin was brought here. Where is it?" The adults knew that this was a trick. So they said, "My
child, just a few minutes ago they took it behind the house over there. 21 They are taking it to the shade over there. 22 If you run real fast, you'll meet them on the road."

23 So the child ran until he came to a house and found some people. 24 He said, "Where is the koro skin which was brought here just now?" 25 They said, "They left here just a few minutes ago. 26 If you run after them you'll catch up to them."

27 They were just deceiving this child to make him run in the sun so that the sun would scorch him. 28 This went on for quite a while until someone who liked him said, "My child, stop. This is just a trick." 29 But this child did not know this to begin with when he heard that it was a very nice thing and it was a very good skin. 30 He had been very excited. 31 He wanted to get the thing, but he just ran after the wind until the sun scorched him and someone who liked him told him what was happening, saying, "They're deceiving you just so that the sun will scorch you." 32 After that the child went home.

33 This is a village story.

Notes

2. parabole -- The word is taken from the New Testament. Here it is probably synonymous with histoire.
4. *yí só* -- This is the object, not the subject, of the verb *sára*. This is why the translation is in the passive. The subject of the verb is indefinite.

5. *tí ñë* -- This appears to serve no function here; the sentence makes good sense without it. The kernel sentence is: *ázo æke hánda ñéérëngé na hánda só*.

7. *só æke* -- This clause is parenthetical. The sentence can stand without it.

8. *póró* -- If the speaker really means skin and not feathers (*kóx tì téré*), this must have been a large bird, perhaps an ostrich; they are found in the Chad where the *Sara Madjingay* live. *penderë míngë* -- The position of *penderë* (here instead of before the noun) is probably determined by the use of *míngë*. One cannot say *penderë míngë póró*.

11. *tonganë* -- Its function here is not clear. *mënë lë só* -- An unusual construction; *mënë lë* would have been enough. The speaker may be making an error in his use of *só*; in 17 *lë só* should be *lë mí*.

12. *chauffer na séë* -- The use of *na* is unclear. The expression is equivalent to *lë amú séë* 'sun took hold of the earth'. *tonganë bûbû* -- *bûbû* 'crazy' is a strong word, and the speaker weakens it with *tonganë*.

15. *vo* -- Here the verb means 'to sell' (= *ká*). Originally the word meant 'to barter'.

18. *kótá zo* -- This expression can also mean 'adult'.

20. ála -- The inconsistency in the use of singular and plural pronouns is typical of Sango narrative; it must be accepted as a characteristic of the language. But the inconsistency may only be apparent; one of the adults is speaking for the group.

19. zo só ní -- One expects the order to be ní só.

24. póró ... fadé -- Notice the long "relative clause" as subject of the verb eke.

28. iusqu'à -- It seems to be used like ngbii, in which case this is a nonverbal "clause" followed by a clause introduced by sí. ndoé -- A New Testament word meaning 'to love'. In ordinary Sango yi is used. awe -- Its use is unclear. There is no need for a perfective here. hú téré -- The usual expression for 'to rest'.

29. Perhaps there are two sentences here, the first ending with pepe; 'The child didn't know this at the beginning. When he heard (about the skin), he thought it was a very good thing....'.

Questions

1. Parabole só ake taá téné?
2. Tenstí yi sí parabole só ake taá téné ape.
3. Éré ti ndeke só ake yi.
4. Na lá ní ká ãmërengë akânga póró na ndo wa.
5. Tongana lá azá ngangó míngí, ázo abóngbi na ndo wa.
6. Tenetf yɔŋ sì zo ní avo póró ní ape.
7. Tenetf yɔŋ sì ála hánda mérenge só.
8. Zo wa sì afa téné ní na mérenge ní.

Model Sentences

1. Azo ahánda ñmérenge na ní (5) 'They tricked children with it'.

2. Ndeke só akes na póró tí pendere míngi (8) 'This bird had a very nice skin'.

3. Azo abóngbi na ñbé dé tí kéké na yá tí kótóró ndé ndé (12) 'People gathered in the shade of trees in different villages'.

4. Ala hó na ní fadé fadé akes goe na ní na mbáge só ká (15) 'They took it away and went off in that direction just a while ago'.

5. Mo èrè ála na ní, ála gá na ní, fadé mbi vo na mo (16) 'If you call them back with it, I'll buy it for you'.

6. Mérenge ní ahúnga ákóta zo só adútí ká (18) 'The child asked the people who were gathered there'.
FOUR

A Choosy Father-in-law (F29)

1 Mbéní lá, mbéní kóli aðu mèrèngé tì wále, atene wále tì mbi, báà mèrèngé tì mbi só; sf tongana lo kono, mbéní kóli tì kòtòrô tì mbi só alîngbi tì marier lo ape. 2 Sì mèrèngé nì alángó ngbii, akono. 3 Mbéní kóli agá, atene, babá, mú na mbi mèrèngé tì wále tì mo só, mbi marier. 4 Sì kóli nì atene, mbi língbi tì mú mèrèngé tì mbi na mo ape. 5 Sì kóli nì atene, ó, mo língbi tì mú na mbi mèrèngé tì mo nì ape ngbangatì yë. 6 Mbi faa mbéní zo tì mo? 7 Sì kóli nì atene, mo goe, mbi yì tì mbi ape.

8 Alángó ngbii, mbéní zo agá encore, atene, babá, mú na mbi mèrèngé tì mo, mbi marier. 9 Sì atene, mbi língbi tì mú na mo mèrèngé tì mbi ape. 10 Sì zo nì atene, mo língbi tì mú na mbi mèrèngé tì mo só ape ngbangatì yë. 11 Sì mèrèngé tì mo só alîngbi mbi míngi. 12 Mo mú na mbi lo, mbi marier. 13 Zo nì atene, mbi yì tì mbi ape.

14 Asára ngú òse. 15 Mbéní zo agá encore, atene, mú na mbi mèrèngé tì mo, mbi marier. 16 Sì zo nì atene, bon, sf tongana mo répondre na question tì mbi só, fade mo eke marier mèrèngé tì mbi só. 17 Sì zo nì atene mo sára question nì, fade mbi eke répondre. 18 Kóli nì atene, répondre nì. 19 Sì tongana mo yì tì gá na ákôngbá tì mú
na pekó ti méréngé ti mbi só, mo gá na kóli ni ape na wále ni ape. 20 Si kóli só atene, o, babá, question só akíri na da, ahúnda babá ti lo, babá ti mbi, báa, mbi yí goe marier méréngé wále ti zo só, si atene, si tongana mbi répondre na question ti lo ni, mbi eke m ré méréngé ni. 22 Babá ti lo ahúnda lo, atene, question ni eke yé. 24 Méréngé ni atene, question ni lo tene, si tongana mbi yí ti goe na kóngbá ti mú na pekó ti méréngé ti lo ni, mbi goe na wále ni na kóli ni ape. 25 Si babá ti lo atene, mo má yángá ti mbi ape só, mbi língbi ti tene na mo ape. 26 Ngbangatí, ti mo, mo séra ti mo gi ngangó mé. 27 Si méréngé ni atene, babá, tongana mo yí ape, mbi eke gi ámbéni wále.

28 Et puis asára encore ngú otá. 29 Mbéní kóli agoe, atene, babá, mbi yí ti marier méréngé ti mo ni. 30 Si kóli ni atene encore, si tongana mo répondre na question ti mbi só, fadé mo eke marier wále ti mbi só. 31 Si atene, bon, question ni eke yé. 32 Kótá kóli só atene, tongana mo yí ti gá na kóngbá ti mú na pekó ti méréngé ti mbi só, mo gá na wále ni na kóli ni ape. 33 Si méréngé ni apenser ngbíi, agoe na kótóró, ahúnda babá ti lo, babá, báa mbéní yí só kótá zo só atene na mbi. 34 Babá ti lo ahúnda lo, atene, yé. 35 Si atene, kótá zo só atene si tongana mbi yí ti goe na kóngbá ti mú na pekó ti wále só, mbi goe na kóli ni na wále ni ape. 36 Si babá ti méréngé ni apenser ngbíi, atene, méréngé ti mbi, goe
21

si taá kotá ndeke. 37 si tongana mo fáa ndeke ni, mo
gá mo mü na ita ti mo, ató lo na mbi, si tongana mbi te,
fadé mbi eke répondre question ni na mo.

38 Mèrèngé ni amú arc ti lo, acoe na ngonda. 39 Agi
ndeke ngbii, afàa mbéni òko, sí agá, amú na ita ti lo.
40 Ita ti lo wále ató na lo. 41 Amú, acoe zìa na table,
na babá ti lo. 42 Babá ti lo ate ngbii, yá ti lo asì.
43 Ayé ngú na pekó ni, sí atëns, question ni aèke, si
tongana lo húnda mo encore, mo tene sí tongana mo yí ti
gá ti mú kóngbá ti mèrèngé ti mo ni, mo gá na ndá péréré
ape, na lá kúí ape.

44 Si mèrèngé ni acoe, akpé, asi na place ti babá ti
mèrèngé só, atëns, babá, mbi sí awe. 45 Babá ti mèrèngé
só atëns, mo wara reponse ni? 46 Si lo tene, mbi wara
awe. 47 Et puis, babá ti mèrèngé ni ahúnda kóli ni, atëns,
réponse ni aèke yê. 48 Atëns na kóli só, si tongana mo
yí ti goe ti mú kóngbá ti pekó ti mèrèngé ti mo só, mo
goe na lá kúí ape, mo goe na ndá péréré ape. 49 Si babá
ti mèrèngé ti wále só apenser ngbii, atëns, bon, mo gá,
mo duti na sése. 50 Si kóli ni agá, adutí na sése.
51 Kóli só atëns na wále ti lo, ató kóbe kóé, azía na
table na kóli só. 52 Kóli só ate ngbii, yá ti lo asî.
53 Si atëns, mèrèngé ti mbi, question ti mbi só mbi kara
na áîta ti mo ngbii, sí mo gá, mo répondre só, mo mú
wále ti mo, álá goe na lo. 54 Si kóli ni amarier na
wále só.
Once a certain man had a daughter and said, "Wife, look at my child here; when she grows up, no man from my village can marry her." So the child lived a while and grew. A certain (young) man came and said, "Father, give me your daughter to marry." So the man said, "I can't give you my daughter." So the (other) man said, "Oh, why can't you give me this daughter of yours? Have I killed anyone of yours?" But the father said, "Go away, I don't want to."

After a while another person came and said, "Father, give me your daughter to marry." But the father said, "I can't give you my daughter." So the man said, "Why can't you give me this daughter of yours? Because your daughter suits me very well. Give her to me to marry." But the father said, "I don't want to."

Two years went by. Another man came and said, "Give me your daughter to marry." So the father said, "All right, when you answer this riddle of mine, you will marry my daughter." So the man said, "You ask the riddle, and I'll answer it." The father said, "Answer it. When you want to bring things to pay for this daughter of mine, don't bring the male or the female."
20 So the man said, "Oh, Father, this riddle doesn't suit me. 21 I'm going." 22 The man went home and asked his father, "Father, look, I want to go marry this man's daughter, but he says that after I answer his riddle I will have the girl." 23 His father asked him, "What is the riddle?" 24 The young man said, "The riddle he asked was, when I want to go make a deposit on his daughter, I am to take neither the male nor the female." 25 Then his father said, "Because you don't obey me, I can't tell you, 26 Because you, you, you are persistently disobedient." 27 So the young man said,"Father, if you refuse, I'll look for other women."

28 And then another three years went by. 29 Another man went and said, "Father, I want to marry this daughter of yours." 30 Then the father said again, "When you answer this riddle of mine, you'll marry my daughter." 31 So the young man said, "All right, what's the riddle?" 32 The old man said, "When you want to bring things to pay for this daughter of mine, bring neither the female nor the male." 33 Then the young man thought a while, went home, and asked his father, "Father, look at this thing that this old man said to me." 34 His father asked him, "What?" 35 He said, "This old man said that when I wanted to take things to pay for the girl, I was to take neither the male nor the female." 36 So the young man's father thought a while and said, "My son, go hunt a really big
bird. 24 And when you have killed the bird, come give it to your sister to cook it for me, and after I’ve eaten it, I’ll answer the riddle for you.

25 The young man took his bow and went into the bush.

26 After hunting a while he killed one, and he came and gave it to his sister. 27 His sister cooked it for him.

28 He took and went and put it on the table for his father.

29 His father ate until he was full. 30 After drinking some water he said, "This riddle is this, so when he asks you again, say that if you want to come to pay for this daughter of yours, don’t come in the morning or the evening."

31 So the young man ran off and came to the place of this girl’s father and said, "Father, I’ve come." 32 The girl’s father said, "Did you get the answer?" 33 And the young man said, "I got it." 34 So the girl’s father asked the young man, "What’s the answer?" 35 He said to the old man, "When you want to go to pay for this daughter of yours, don’t go in the evening and don’t go in the morning."

36 So the girl’s father thought a while and said, "All right, come and sit down." 37 So the young man came and sat down. 38 Then the man said to his wife, "Cook all kinds of food and put it on the table for this young man.”

39 The young man ate until he was full. 40 Then the old man said, "My son, this riddle of mine with which I stumped all your companions for a long time, you’ve come
and answered it, take the girl and go." So the young man married the girl.

So the Gbeya say, "You must obey your father."

Notes

1. *si* — The narrator's style is characterized by a great use of this connective. The student should study each occurrence carefully. Some of them may have no real function: for example, *si tongana* in 19 and elsewhere. The narrator seems to use these words as a single unit.

2. *alángó ... akono* — This is a typical Sango sentence. All the speaker wants to say is that the child then grew up.

3. *baba* — This is being used as a polite form of address. In 20 politeness is also conveyed by the sentence particle *o. kóli* — This is just to indicate the sex. These are young men, even adolescent boys, who come. In 33 the word *mérénégé* is used of one of them. *marier* — Notice the two closely connected clauses: *mú ... marier* and in 2 *lángó ... kono*. *mú wále* is the typical Sango expression for 'marry'. When the French verb is used, it is sometimes followed by *na* as in 54.

8. *alángó* — There may be no specific subject. Although the meaning is 'things stayed like this for a
while', one can not use *thing* with the verb when it is used temporally. Another temporal expression is in 14.

11. alingbi -- One expects *na* after this verb when the meaning is to 'suit': that is, 'is equal to' or 'is sufficient to'. But *na* is often omitted in certain set expressions. See also 20.

12. mu na mbi lo -- This seems to be an ungrammatical lapse. One expects *mu lo na mbi*.

16. question -- The context suggests that this is a riddle, not a question in the proper sense. There is no Sango word for riddle. The verb is being used as it is in French, that is, with a preposition: *répondre à*. But in Sango one also says *kiri téne na téne só*, 'answer this statement (or question)'. In 37 the verb is used differently, with the meaning 'explain'.

19. mu na peko ti -- This is the usual expression for paying with goods (kôngbá) or money (nginza) for a wife. The whole transaction is referred to by the expression *vo wále* 'buy a wife'. It must be remembered, however, that *vo* originally meant 'to barter' as is seen in the expression *vo ngéré* 'to do business', perhaps originally 'to barter with one person giving money (pieces of iron, shells, etc.)'. One does not use *payer* in reference to marriage, but it is commonly used of all other purchases.

22. da -- One expects *kótóró* here because the young man would be from a different village. yir gôe marier --
Notice how verbs are strung along. Ordinarily the dependent verbs would be introduced by *tī* that is, *wī tī ge* *tī* marier.

25. Compare this sentence with the moral in 55. In 36 the father is not bribing his son; each is doing the other a good turn.

26. *sāra ngangō mē* — Another one of the many expressions with the empty verb *sāra; ngangō mē* 'hard ears'.

27. *ri wali* — Perhaps the young man is threatening to be promiscuous with women. The expression is ambiguous.

28. *arc = kondere*.

38. *wó ngū* — There is nothing significant about drinking water. The narrator is simply indicating that the father did not give the answer until he was entirely through with the meal. Ordinarily one washes his hands after eating, since the fingers have been used in dipping into the sauce, then rinses out his mouth, and then drinks water. Nothing is drunk during the meal proper. *ekee* — Everything that follows is a complement of this verb.

39. *gá na ndá péréré ape* — The story is a disappointment because the answer to the riddle does not make sense. In any case, there is an ambiguity here: *gá na kónghé* means 'bring goods' and *gá na ndá péréré* means 'come in the morning'. Perhaps the ambiguity is part of the riddle. To be so, it would have to exist in the native language of the speaker.
44. *mbi si awe* — This or *mbi ga awe* is a common way of announcing one's arrival as part of one's greeting.

49. *dutí na sése* — This does not necessarily mean 'sit on the ground'.

53. *kara na* — The kernel sentence is *mbi kara alta*

*tí mo na question tí mbi.*
The Disobedient Sister (F34)

1. Na légé tì te re tì kótóro tì áni, mbéni masia aske, na ñà tì lo tì kóli ni.

2. Tongaso, ña ñà tì tì lo tì kóli ni, àla ñke goe na mbéni kótóro. 3. Ña àla si na mbéni place tì kótá témé.

4. Na tongaso, ñà tì lo tì kóli ni atene na lo, atene, só ñ goe só, tongana ñ goe, ñ si ká na place ni, fade ñi wara mbéni zo ká. 5. Mais mo sâra lángó sióni na álá pepe.

6. Tongana mo sâra lángó sióni, kíringó tì áni tì si gígi tì gà na kótóro, fade yá tì mo só mo mé ngo só àgá kótá awe, na fade mo língbi wara légé tì si gígi ape.

7. Tongaso, ñà tì lo tì wále só ñmá awe, na álá goe.


11. Témé só áeks sûru, na álà na ñà tì tì lo ali ká, na place ni. 12. Ála goe dutí ká, álâ lángó mingi, álâ sâra ngú mingi kétó.


16. Tongaso, lóndóngó tì álà ká tì kíri tì si gígi na
gigi, ala ga jusqu'à na yángá ni só, ake kété kété só, wále ni awara lége ti sì gigi kà pepe, tenetí yá ti lo akono awe, na lége ti lo ti sì gigi kà ake pepe tenetí téré ti dú ti témé ni ake kété kété mingi.

17 Tongasó ñta ti lo ni âtene na lo, âtene, mbi tene na mo awe giriri, mbi tene, alingbi mo sára yì ti sioní pepe. 18 Tongana mo sára yì ti sioní, fadé yá ti mo agá kótá, na fadé mo lingbi wara lége ti sì gigi pepe.

19 Mais fadeso, mo má yángá ti mbi pepe. 20 Mo goe mo sára sioní yì awe, yá ti mo agá kótá awe, bon, fadé mo ngbá ti mo na yá ti dú ti témé ni, na mbi, fadé fadé mbi goe ti mbi. 21 Tongasó, lo zia lo na yá ti dú ti témé ni, lo sì gigi ti lo.

22 So ake téné só, tongana zo asára téné na mo, mo ke yángá ti lo, mo bata téné ti lo pepe, fadé mbéní lá, yì atì na li ti mo, na fadé lo eke húnda yángá ti mo.

23 So ndá ti téné ni laá. 24 Ti mbi awe.

Translation

1 According to a traditional tale of ours, there was a certain unmarried girl and her brother.

2 Now she and her brother were going to another village. 3 And they came to place with a huge rock. 4 So her brother said to her, "Going on as we are, when we go and arrive there, we'll find some people there. 5 Don't
commit fornication among them. 6 If you commit fornication, when it comes time for us to come out to go home, your belly will have conceived and got big, and you won't be able to come out."

7 So when his sister had heard this, they went on. 8 And as they began to go along, to go along, he began to sing in Gbeya, he began to say [...]. 9 When they began to sing like that, this rock split. 10 This rock split. 11 This rock split, and he and his sister entered there in the opening. 12 They went and stayed there; they stayed quite a while; they were there several years.

13 But his sister did not obey what he had told her long before. 14 So she committed fornication with a man there. 15 And now she had become pregnant.

16 So on their departure to return to come out, they arrived at the opening, but it was very small and the girl did not find a way to come out because her belly was big and there was no way for her to go out because the sides of the hole in the rock were very narrow.

17 So her brother said to her, "I had told you long ago that you must not commit evil. 18 If you committed evil, your belly would become big, and you wouldn't be able to come out. 19 But now you haven't obeyed me. 20 You've gone and committed evil and your belly is big; all right, you'll stay in the cave of the rock, and as for me, I'm going right away." 21 So he left her in the cave of the
rock and went out.

22 This is what this is about: When someone tells you something but you reject it and you don't obey it, some day something will happen to you, and he will reproach you for it.

23 This is the end of the story. 24 Mine is done.

Notes

1. tí — Notice how possessed phrases can be piled on top of each other: kótóró tí áni, then tere tí kótóró tí áni, and finally lége tí tere tí kótóró tí áni. masía — Protestant word for unmarried girl.

2. lo na — Instead of anticipatory plural álá na, Compare 11.

3. témé — It is not clear what is happening. The characters make their way through the split in the rock only after the earthquake (?), but they had already set out on their trip and they apparently did not have to use such a passage to get to their destination. Yet it seems that the girl becomes pregnant at the village to which they were going in the first place, not a different one. Why did they leave the main path and crawl through the cleft in the rock? And why did they stay so long? Things might be much clearer in the longer version, which in Gbeya might take anywhere from 15 minutes to one hour to tell.
However, even in the long version there might be problems, and it is part of the tradition for the audience to ask the storyteller questions.

4. só 1 goe só, tongana 1 goe, 1 sí ká -- This might seem like too many words to say what needs to be said, but the construction is typically Sango.

5. lângô sioni -- A Protestant expression for extramarital sexual relations.

6. kírîngô ... na kôándô -- Preclausal construction. See also 16. vá tí mo só mo mé ngo só -- As it stands, this construction, although perfectly good Sango, does not seem to be grammatical. One expects the first phrase to be a part of the following verb phrase in a kernel sentence, but ngo, not vá is the object of mé. Perhaps there is an omitted na: for example, mo mé ngo na vá tí mo 'you conceived with your belly'. The construction here would then mean 'the belly with which you conceived'.

fadé ... awe -- Both occurring to give the meaning 'will have ...'.

12. lângô -- 'To stay for one or more nights' is a common use of this verb: for example, mbi lângô ká rì óko 'I stayed there just one night'. ngú mângi kété -- kété attenuates the force of mângi and not vice versa, for which see 16.

13. pesp -- The verb bata is negated, not tens.

15. fadesô -- The meaning 'now' should not always be
taken in a temporal sense. This word also functions as a discourse-linking word. Here and in 19 fadesó seems to mean something like 'here you've gone and done so and so' in disregard of something that had been said. That is, fadesó implies earlier statements and actions, not just time.

16. sigi -- The occurrence after the verb si does not seem to be necessary with na sigi following. But some people appear to use sigi or sigisi as a single verb; if they could nominalize it into sigingó or sigisingó, then it would be such a verb for them. kono -- The same as asá kóta in 6 and 18.

17. awe -- One expects awe at the end of the clause. If it is misplaced, it is in imitation of missionary speech. alíngbi mo sára -- Putting alíngbi before a clause is the missionary way of expressing obligation. The narrator could have simply said mbi tens na mo tí sára yí tí sioni pepe.

22. téné só -- It is difficult to tie this clause in with the following, but it may be a perfectly good preclausal construction.
The Rat and the Mouse (F41)

1. Téné sô mbi yî tî tene sô aëke téné tî tere tî deko.


10. Tongana lo eke gâ aye, na lo gâ ndurú tî lî na yâ tî da sô aye, andâ kôtâ kugbé sô aëke toto na më tî deko kâ, aëke mâ. 11. Na deko sô âlângó na yâ nî kâ sô amâ, atene, é, sô yë laa.


14. Tongasó aye, lo zia lôrô da. 15. Lo sî gigi na mbenî lége tî dû kâ, na lo zia yâ tî da nî sëngé.
16 Tongaso awe, kété kété deko só agá, ali na yá ni, tenetí só kótá ni só aëke na mbito tí ngbó. 17 Tongana lo báa, atene, ngbó só fade alíngbi tí sára mbéni yí na lo. 18 Tongaso awe, lo sí gigí, na lo zía lóó da, sí kété kété ni só agá, alángó na yá ni. 19 Só aëke mbéni malin.

20 Sí tongana mbéni kótá zo aëks, sí mo yi tí mú yí na mabóko tí lo, na mo aëke ngangó pepe, mo gá na lége tí hánda, sí mo língbi tí kamáta yí só aëke na mabóko tí lo só.

21 Téné tí mbi laá, awe. 22 Só aëke téné tí tere tí deko.

Translation.

1 The story I want to tell is a fable about the Rat.

2 There was a certain Rat in the bush. 3 And there was a very small one too [that is, a small mouse]. 4 (Now as for rats and snakes, they never get along together.)

5 The Mouse wanted to play a trick. 6 And he wanted to come and take the house of this big rat.

7 One day when the Rat was lying in his house, and the Mouse was looking for a way to come to live in this house, the latter thought, "Me, I don't have the strength to build a house. 8 And what am I going to do to have a large house in which to live in?"
2 So one day, when he had decided to come, he took a large leaf in his mouth.

10 When he had approached and was just about to enter the house, this large leaf was making a noise heard by the Rat. 11 And the Rat was lying there inside; he heard the noise and said, "Say, what's that there?"

12 At this the Rat heard and said, "This human voice I hear is not the voice of an ordinary human. 13 But this is a snake which wants to enter."

14 At this he took flight. 15 He escaped by another exit of the hole, and he left the inside of the house empty.

16 So the Mouse entered it because the Rat was afraid of snakes. 17 When he saw what was happening, he thought that the snake might do something to him. 18 So he went out and fled, so that the Mouse came and slept in it.

19 This was a trick. 20 So when there is an important person and you want to take something from him, and you don't have the strength (or authority), you come by deception, so you can take what he has.

21 I'm finished with my story. 22 It's a fable about the Rat.
Notes

1. téné tì tere — For comment see N49, sentence 1. deko — This word is used of both rats and mice. Although there are indeed big and little rats, the story makes better sense with a rat and mouse rivalry.

4. téné — This sentence says that the rat and the snake were not in verbal accord, that they disagreed over something. Since the speaker wants to say that they were rivals, it is surprising that he did not say something like lâ köé deko na ngbá, álá sára bë ôko aye 'the rat and the snake never got along together'.

7. na — This speaker's style is characterized by a great use of this connective, even to introduce a main clause preceded by a tongana clause.

10. andéa — Sometimes this word is translated 'it turns out that' or 'in other words'. There is no doubt about what is happening; the narrator just calls attention to it: 'At the very moment when the mouse arrived, the leaf was already making a sound'.

Áse má — Notice that the same object, deko, is, on the one hand, the specific grammatical object of tì and the understood subject of má. This kind of construction is common in Sango.

12. zo — This is not to be taken literally as 'person'. The animals are after all taking the place of people.

Sàngé — Tricking a character by devising something very unusual is a common theme in the fables.
17. ngbó só -- This is the same as fade ngbó só
alíngbi .... na lo -- ní could have been used instead of
lo because the rat is speaking of himself.

Questions

1. So ake téné tí yë.
2. Kété deko ayí tí sára yë.
4. Kété deko akámátá kugbé ní na yë.
5. Yë atoto na mé tí kótá deko ní.
6. Tënétí yë kótá deko ní azía da tí lo.
7. Tonganá kótá deko azía da ní, mbéni yí ake
na yá ní?
8. Zo alíngbi tí mú yí na mabóko tí zo na lége yë.

Model Sentences

1. Téné tí deko na tí ngbó (2) 'This is about rats
and snakes'.
2. Lo yí tí gá tí kamátá da tí kótá deko ní só (4)
'He wanted to come to take possession of Rat's house'.
3. Mbi wara ngangó tí sára da pépe (5) 'I don't have
the strength to make a house'.
4. Lo sá ndurú tí li na yá tí da só (8) 'He was just
about to enter this house.'
5. *Só a ṣẹ̀kẹ̀ ọgbọ̀ lа̀dá ọ̀fọ̀ tí ọ́dún só (%3)* 'That's a snake which wants to come here'.

6. *Lo ṣẹ̀kẹ̀ na mbitọ tí ọgbọ̀ (%17)* 'He is afraid of snakes'.

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40
Guarding a Corn Field (N13)

1 Babá tí mbi adú ñ méréngé tí kóli otá. 2 Lo eke na wále osió.

3 Fadedó lo gá, apíka piquet tí coton ukú. 4 Na pekó ni agá ake fáa yáká tí coton só. 5 Agoe lú nzó, agoe lú nzó. 6 Amú ñ ñméréngé otá, azía ñ na yá tí yáká tí nzó ni, atene, só, tongana f goe, sí ndeke afáa nzó ni óko, f mbi a si na yá tí da tí ni ape.

7 Na pekó ni lo goe, ake fáa yáká tí coton. 8 Na pekó ni ñ goe f dutí.

9 Ndá ni kóli agá anzi nzó tí babá tí i só, afáa otá. 10 Et puis na pekó ni, fáa i sí i tene, á, íta, fadesó babá ake mbírimbírí ape. 11 Mais gí ñ ñméréngé i eke na yáká tí nzó. 12 Tongasó mo gá mo fáa yáká tí nzó ni só. 13 Mo fáa ngbangatí ye. 14 Lo tene, ó, i tene tongasó ape. 15 Agoe amú f awe, apíka f ngbii.

16 Atene, tongana i tene lá só si fade ni eke fáa yángá tí í na zembe. 17 I tene, á, íta, ka i eke ñméréngé só. 18 Babá atene, tongana i eke na ndo tí nzó ni, mbéní zo agá atoucher ape. 19 Mais lo gá ahúnda i ape. 20 Au lieu ayí títene lo húnda babá tí mbi só. 21 Lo húnda babá tí mbi só ape, agá afáa yáká tí nzó tí babá tí mbi só. 22 Anzi otá akpe na ni awe.
23 Na pekó ní mbi gá mbi sára téné ní, mbi teure, babá, mbéni kótá kóli agá, alóndó na yá tí ngonda, agá así. 24 Na pekó ní afáa yáká tí nzö ní. 25 Et puis 1 gá 1 sára téné. 26 Lo tense, ní eke fáa 1 na likongó. 27 Fadesó lo kpé awe. 28 Et puis babá tí mbi só atene, 1 goe 1 fa lége tí lo. 29 1 tense, non, 1 hínga tí 1 lége tí lo ape, ngbangatí só 1 eke tí 1 amérendé o. 30 Lé tí 1 adé aouvrir ape só.

31 Et puis 1 tense na lo tongaso, babá tí 1 só agá ahúnsi téré tí lo awe. 32 Atene, 1 o, ndá adé 1 gá na yáká tí nzö ní ape. 33 Agá ahúnsi téré tí lo awe, ngbíi.

34 Na pekó ní, kóli só agoe ate awe. 35 Et puis na pekó ní lo sí gigi tí tène, agá afáa mbéni só, babá agá agbó lo awe. 36 Babá agbó lo awe, atene, andáa lo eke zó tí nzé. 37 Andáa yì tongaso lá kóé, sí 1 gá sí lo eke tomba 1 na ndó tí nzé ní só. 38 Et puis agbó lo, así gigi na lo na makunzi. 39 Et puis apayer cinq cents francs.

40 Awe.

Translation

1 My father had three sons. 2 He had four wives.
2 Once he came and staked out five cotton plots. 4 Then he cultivated these cotton fields. 5 He (also) planted corn. 6 He took us three kids and put us in the corn field and said that if, in spite of our being there, birds
should eat even one ear of corn, we better not come home.

7 Then he went and cultivated the cotton field. 8 Then we went and sat down.

9 Then a man came and stole our father's corn and broke off three (ears). 10 So we went to him and said, "Friend, right now Father is not here. 11 But it's just us kids in the corn field. 12 But you come and you cut this corn field. 13 Why did you cut it?" 14 He said, "Ho, don't you talk like that." 15 He grabbed us and beat us for quite a while. 16 He said, "If you say anything today, I'll cut your tongues out with a knife." 17 We said, "Ah, Friend, we're just kids. 18 Father said that when we were in the corn field, no one could come and touch the corn." 19 But he didn't come and ask us.

20 He should have first asked my father. 21 He didn't ask my father, but he came and cut my father's corn field. 22 He stole three ears and ran off with them.

23 Then I came and reported this, I said, "Father, a grown man came out of the bush and arrived (in the field). 24 Then he cut the corn field. 25 Then we came and said something. 26 He said, he would kill us with a spear. 27 He's run away now." 28 Then my father told us to go and show where he went. 29 We said, "No, we're sorry, but we can't show where he went, because we're just kids. 30 We're still immature."

31 So when we had told him this, our father came and
hid. 22 He told us not to go to the corn field in the morning. 23 He came and hid for a while.

24 In the meantime, this man had gone and eaten (the corn). 25 Then when he came out into the open to break off some ears of corn, Father went and grabbed him. 26 Father went and grabbed him and said, "So he's a thief. 27 So this is how things always are when he chases us from the corn." 28 Then he took the man before the (village) headman. 29 Then (the thief) paid 500 francs.

30 That's all.

Notes

1. *babá tè I adú I* — Although *dú* literally means 'to give birth, to bear', it can be used of men to mean 'to have offspring'.

3. *píka piquet tè coton* — In the cotton-growing areas cotton agriculture has long been standardized by means of a field of 60 paces square, the minimum of what an adult could work by himself. The act of measuring out the field was accompanied by pounding stakes into the ground, setting off one person's field from the others in an area where all the cotton gardens for one village were located. An equivalent expression is *jalon tè coton*.

4. *fàa yàkà* — All that is involved in preparing a field for planting, but primarily chopping down trees
and clearing the brush.

24, 25. *fáa váká tí nzó* — This is clearly a lapse. The narrator meant to say *fáa nzó* 'break off an ear of corn'.

31. *lé ... aouvrir* (or *lungula*) 'eyes ... open' — This is a metaphorical characterization of maturity.

Questions

1. Where was the father when the boys were in the corn garden?
2. From where did the boys see the man?
3. Why did the boys talk to the man about the theft?
4. What did the man threaten the boys with? How did the man threaten the boys?
5. What reason did the boys give for not knowing where the man had gone?
6. When did the man return to steal corn?

Model Sentences

1. *Gí 1 ámérengé, 1 eke na vá tí váká tí babá* (13) 'It's just us kids in Father's garden'.
2. *A, íta, ka 1 eke ámérengé só* (19) 'Friend, but we're just kids'.
3. *I hinga lége tí lo ape, ngbangati só 1 eke tí*
4. Nda ade, daa goo na yaka ti nzö ape (33) 'In the morning don't go to the corn garden'.

5. Andaa, lo sche zo ti nzö (36) 'So it comes out that he's a thief'.

6. Yi tongasö la koe s'lo sche tomba i na nde ti nzö ni sō (37) 'What happens like this all the time is that he's chasing us from the corn'.

1 Araba o (30) 'We don't know where he went because we're just kids'.

We don't know where he went because we're just kids.
EIGHT

The Helicopter's Arrival (N21)

1 Mbi, Aliko laa si mbi ga ti sara tene ti helicoptere na ale.

2 Mbéné là, i së ke na ecole, avion ti só, éré ni helicoptere aëks hë na ndüzú. 3 I, aélève ni koë, i löndó, i zia lé ti i koë, i baa ni. 4 Ailes ni aëks tourner mingi mingi. 5 I löndó koë, i së gigi awe. 6 Na peko ni, álsa ti i akpê ti álá, ti kpê na marché ti baa ni. 7 I ngbâ ti i gi na ya ti da. 8 Et puis maître ni, directeur ti i atene na ámbénf álsa ti i, atene na âmaître ti i, atene, álá só agoe ti baa ti álá kózo awe, álá ngbâ.

9 I só i goe ti i peps, i goe fadesó, i baa. 10 Eh bien álá só agoe ti álá sans permission, fade álá së ke punir [puni] álá.

11 Eh bien na onze heures, i goe i sii. 12 Na onze heures i sii na place ti marché, i baa helicoptere ti premier fois ni. 13 I baa ni awe, alondó ti decoller. 14 Azo ni só na yá ni ayú kpoto ti álá, azía na li ti álá. 15 Chauffeur ni só, éré ni na yángá ti français, pilote, lo gbó yì ni, atourner, bingbá bingbá yì ni, atourner, sì ailes ti avion ni acommencer ti tourner.

16 Fadesó acommencer ti tourner, kótá pupú agá, si i koë, asára pupú na lé ti i. 17 Directeur ti ecole ti mbáge ti
Et acommencer ti lénè. Asara poussière, at ëfà ti i koé akir na gigi. Alondô awà, chauffeur mi asara i mingi mingi. Et puis àla tene, fadé àla ekir na dimanche.

Et na dimanche ni, mbi ekw da pepe. Mbi goe bi ëfà mbona messe na quinze kilomètres na lègga ti Bambarà.

Agà, mbi ekw da i mbi bàa tì la ni pepe. So agà na dimanche ni. Mbi gà, àfètì mbi asara tënè ni na mbi. Si mbi yì tì sàra tënè ni na àla.

Translation

1 It's me, Aliko, who has come to tell you about the helicopter.

2 Once, when we were in school, this airplane, it's called a helicopter, it was passing overhead. All of us students, we got up and we all turned our eyes and looked at it. Its propellers were turning fast. We had all risen and gone outside. Then some of our buddies ran to the market to see it. As for us, we stayed in the building. Then the teacher......, our director said to some of us, told our teachers that they who had already gone to see would stay. We who had not gone, we could now go to see it. But those who went without permission would be punished.

So at eleven o'clock we went and arrived at the
place. At eleven o'clock we came to the market place and saw the helicopter for the first time. After we had seen it, it arose to leave. The people inside put on their caps. The driver, whose name in French is pilote, took the thing, the very red thing, and turned it so that the propellers started to turn. When it started to turn, a big wind arose, and the wind got in all our eyes. The school director from the other side of the river pushed us away and said that we shouldn't go underneath (the helicopter). The airplane started to rise. It made dust, and our buddies drew away. When it got off the ground, the driver waved to us a lot. They also said that they would return on Sunday. On that Sunday I wasn't there. I had gone for Mass at a place 15 kilometers away on the Bambari road. When it came, I wasn't there to see it on that day. It came on that Sunday. When I had returned, my buddies told me about it. So I want to tell you about this (incident of the helicopter).

Notes

1. laà — Although the combination of laà and si is grammatical, it would have been possible to have one or the other.

2. éré ni — Notice how the equivalent of a possessive
relative clause is constructed: for example, za go écâ ni (aka) Pierre 'the person whose name is Peter'. See also sentence 15. ti go -- By using this possessive construction and pausing after it, the speaker expresses doubt; for example, 'This what-you-call-it kind of airplane'.

6. ti álá 'on their part' -- This is neatly contrasted with ti f 'on our part' in 7.

8. The narrator got mixed up but finally makes things straight: The principal of the school authorized the other teachers to dismiss the children. álâ go -- Notice the contrast again between álâ and f as in 6 and 7.

10. álâ -- Since the narrator is referring to what the principal said, the subject of the punir is directeur. The plural pronoun is used instead of lo out of respect, and since this is not a quoted passage ni is not used.

13. bâa awe -- This person prefers to use nonmarked dependent clauses instead of subordinating them with tongâna. See also 20, 24, and 26. Thus, his style is different from that of the narrator of N56.

16. ã kóé -- This kind of dangling construction is common in the languages of the Central African Republic. The kernel sentence is probably kóâ punu akâ, esâra lé ti ã kóé 'a big wind arose and got into all our eyes'.

17. atene ã ge -- A command in indirect discourse.

19. ègî -- Elsewhere this word means 'outside' with respect to some kind of enclosure. It can also refer
to any space more or less removed from a center. Thus yema tí ngu na yema tí gigi are contrasted for 'aquatic creatures' and 'nonaquatic creatures'. By extension gigi can be used of outsiders: for example, azo tí gigi.

21. kirí -- Here this verb means 'come back to' instead of 'go back to'.

23. sára messe -- The child is simply going to attend the service. A more general term is sára ndzara 'to attend a religious service, to worship'.

24. pepe -- The main clause is mbi eke da pepe 'I wasn't there'.

Questions

1. Tongana hélicoptère aske hú na ndúzú, amérengé ní aske na ndo wa.

2. Amérengé ní akpé na ndo wa tí báa hélicoptère ní.

3. Azo na yá tí hélicoptère ayú yi yé na li tí ála.

4. Tenéti yé Aliko abáa hélicoptère na lá ní ape.
Highwaymen on the Road to Bangui (N23)

1 Mbéné lâ mbi sf na Bangui. 2 Mbi na ëta tî mbi ë lônô tî goe na kóta galâ. 3 I gâ, ë tî âzo otâ na kóta lége. 4 Dono ë eke na yâ tî camion. 5 Allez ë sf tongasô, âzo agâ barrer lége na âni. 6 Azo agâ barrer lége na âni. 7 Na mbéné ôko aga lutî na devant tî âni. 8 Na mbéné ôko asâra maboko tî lo tongasô. 9 Allez, ëta tî mbi ni acompter maboko tî lo ni âpe. 10 Lo eke na yâ tî vitesse. 11 I kpé jusqu'à t sf. 12 Alors mbi eke na yâ tî camion na peko. 13 Mbéné abî témé, ayî tî wara mbi na kâ. 14 Mbi déngë li tî mbi tongasô, témé ni apasser mbi zéro.

15 Mais i kpé ngbî, t lutî. 16 Alors ëta tî mbi ni asî gigi, ahûnda mbi, atene, yâ laâ apasser mbi na yâ tî camion ni. 17 Mbi tene, yî apasser mbi âpe. 18 Atene, mbi bâa âbandit tî ë lutî na lége so. 19 Mbi tene, oui, mbi bâa âla, mbi bâa âla. 20 Lo ngbâ naa so, lo hûnda mbi, atene, est-ce que âla ba mbéné yî na mbi âpe? 21 Mbi tene, non, âla ba témé na mbi, eh bien témé ni apasser mbi zéro awe.

22 Allez, i lutî na yângâ tî magasin tî Printania. 23 Alors mbéné police ni aga ëse. 24 (....) Dono, mbéné kôlî ni anzi nganza tî mbéné ni. 25 Kôlî ni aga tî vo.
I once went to Bangui. My brother and I left for the capital. On our way we came upon three men on the highway. We were in the truck. Having arrived, we found our way barred by them. The men had barred our way. One of them stood in front of us. Another one gestured with his arms like this. My brother ignored the man's gesture. He was going fast. We kept going until we arrived (where they were). I was in the back of the truck. One of them threw a stone to hurt me. I ducked my head like this and the stone went by without hurting me.

We went on for a while and stopped. My brother then got out and asked me what had happened to me in the back of the truck. I told him that nothing had happened to me. He asked me if I had seen the bandits who had stood at the roadside. I said, "Yes, I did; I did."
He asked me also, "Didn't they throw anything at you?"
I said, "On the contrary, they threw a stone at me but it went by without hitting me."
We ended up in front of the Printania store. Two policemen came. A man had stolen another man's money. The man had come to buy a gun and this man, the thief, stole the money.
The police thought it was we who had stolen this man's money. He came and began to search us. My brother said, "No, it's not us. We've just arrived. It's not us. It's someone else who has stolen the money."
So the police let us go, and we went home.

Notes

2. mbi na fta -- The anticipated plural pronoun I could have been used instead of mbi.
4. done -- The French use does not make much sense here. This is where one might have a Gbaya expression which means 'in other words' and is used as a connective in a narrative.
11. jusqu'à -- Used here like nsbil in 15.
14. passer -- Notice the difference between this use and the one in 16. zéro -- Probably from soccer argot.
17. vi ... ape 'something ... not' equals 'nothing'.
21. awe -- One does not expect awe with its perfective meaning here. Perhaps this is an error in imitation of missionaries. The speaker also uses the Protestant pronoun
âni. But one does not expect too many deviations from her, because lingua franca Sango is her native language.

22. Printania -- This is a self-service grocery store in downtown Bangui which, because of its central location, is a meeting place for Europeans and Africans alike.

23. òse -- This clause is equivalent to police òse aga. The only difference is a stylistic one.

24. mbéni ni -- The contrast between mbéni kóli 'a man' and mbéni ni 'another (man)' is clear, but this is a rare use of ni. One could also say mbéni zo ndé 'a different person'.

25. sí -- Here and in 31 are good examples of this connective combining a subject with a verb.

Questions

1. Where were the girl and her brother when they met the three men?

2. How many men stood in front of the truck?

3. What did one of the men do with his arms?

4. Where was the girl when all this happened?

5. How did the girl avoid getting hit?

6. What was thrown at the girl?

7. Where did they stop after coming into Bangui?

8. Why did the policemen search them?
9. Whose money was stolen?

Model Sentences

1. Mbi na sá tî mbi f lôndô tî gôe na Bangui (2) 'My brother and I left for Bangui'.

2. I së f tî ázo otâ na kôta lége (3) 'On our way we came upon three men on the highway'.

3. I sì tôngasô, âkôli nî akânga lége na f (5) 'Having arrived, we found our way barred by the men'.

4. I kré ngbîl, f lûtí (15) 'We went on for a while and stopped'.

5. Ita f tî mbi nî ahûnda mbi atene, yë laâ asâre mbi na yë tî camion (16) 'My brother asked me what happened to me in the truck'.

6. Mbi bâa âbandit sô alutî na lége sô (18) 'I saw the bandits who were standing along the road'.

7. Ala bi mbënî yî na mo aye? (20) 'Didn't they throw anything at you?'

8. Asek mbënî zo sî anzi ngingza tî kôli nî sô (31) 'It is someone else who stole the man's money'.

9. Sîngô tî f ràa (29) 'We've just arrived.'
TÉN

A Vacation Episode (N28)

1 Éré té mbi -----.  
2 Askte gi lá ti Pâques na vacances.  
3 I goe na 
Kaba na téré té ngú té gi ásusu.  
4 I na amérèngé té 
wále otá.  
5 I goe, 1 lângó (....) na nzoní da.  
6 Mbéní 
lá, ázo atene na 1, akóta yama asek ká.  
7 Et puis 1 
quitter na place ni, 1 goe na mbéní place encore.  
8 (....) 
Ala tene place ni encore, kótá yama ni atambéla na li té 
da.  
9 Et puis 1 goe ti gi ásusu na ngú.  
10 I zia 
amérèngé té wále na yá té da ni.  
11 Ti kíringó ni, 1 si 
na yá té da na bi.  
12 Amérèngé té wále acommencer ti dó 
téré té álal.  
13 Ala tene, fade yama ni adévorer l.  
14 Et puis 1 londo na place ni na bi.  
15 Temps ni, lune 
aeks da.  
16 I londo na bi, 1 traverser akóta kéké atí 
nalése.  
17 I gá ngbii ngbii ngbii, (.....) 1 si na place 
só 1 lângó da só, jusqu'à 1 lângó ká.  
18 Así na ndá 
péréré, 1 goe na place ti ámbéní zo, alângó na téré té l.  
19 Ala mú na 1 yf té tc.  
20 I kíri encore na place ni.  
21 I lângó, (.....) 1 má ábruit té ngonda kóé.  
22 (.....) 
 ámbéní kéké acommencer ti kúngbi na téré té l.  
23 (.....) 
Na bi, pupu acommencer ti gá.  
24 Et puis da ni alungúla, 
atí na sése.  
25 Na ndá péréré encore, 1 londo 1 goe na 
kótóró.  
26 Awe.
Translation

1 My name is ———.

2 This happened during Easter vacation. 3 We had gone to where the Kaba people live along the river to fish. 4 There were three other girls and myself. 5 We went and slept in a nice house. 6 One day people told us that there were large animals there. 7 So we left that place and went to another place. 8 They said that in that place also large animals climbed on the roof of the house. 9 So we went fishing at the river. 10 We left a few of the girls in the house. 11 It was night when we returned to the house. 12 The girls began to tremble. 13 They said, "The animals are going to eat us." 14 So we left the place at night. 15 There was moonlight at that time. 16 We left at night and crossed the river by means of trees which had fallen down. 17 We walked on and on until we came to the place where we were to sleep, and there we slept. 18 When morning came, we went to where some people were nearby. 19 They gave us something to eat. 20 Then we went back again to the original place. 21 As we lay in bed, we heard all the bush noises. 22 Trees began to fall around us. 23 The wind began to blow at night. 24 And then the house collapsed and fell to the ground. 25 In the morning we left and went home. 26 That's all.
2.  **lā** -- This word does not always have the meaning 'sun' or 'day'. Here with **Pâques** it means 'Easter time' (compare 15 where **temps** is used with the same sense). The expression **mbēnī lā** ordinarily means 'one day' or 'once', but these meanings seem inappropriate here since the vacation period is so short and because we can assume that the people told them about the animals upon their arrival. One would expect **lā ni** 'at that time' instead.

3. **Kaba** -- The Kaba are an ethnic group ('tribe') who live in the northwestern part of the country and speak a Sara language. They are primarily agricultural people; but those who live near the large rivers also fish. There is nothing unusual about the locative use of **Kaba**; the names of other ethnic groups can be used in the same way. **ásusu** -- Individuated plurality. This text should be studied for the various uses of the plural marker. See also: 4, 7, 9, 10, 16, 18, 19, 22.

4. **#** -- Anticipated plural. If there were only four girls, however, sentence 10 would have to mean 'One other girl and I left the remaining two girls in the house'. The anecdote as told does not ring entirely true. One does not expect four adolescent girls to go on a fishing expedition, especially in an area that is unfamiliar to them.
7. **quitter na** -- In French *quitter* would not be followed by a preposition, but it is being used here like *londó* as in 14. **encore** -- It is not always clear how this French word is being used. Here it seems to be used with the same meaning as *ndó* 'different' which would occur in this position also. In sentence 20 it has the meaning 'once more'. But in 25 its contribution is difficult to determine. Notice that *encore* occurs both in noun and verb phrases.

11. **tí kíríngó ní** -- Literally, 'as for returning'. A nominalized verb phrase at the beginning of a sentence is used like English *on returning home*. It would have been possible to say *f kírí f sí na vá tí da na bí*.

12. **dí** -- The usual expression for 'tremble' is *téré adó* (*dí* means 'to stamp, pound'). This is an illustration of how verbs can be used both transitively and intransitively.

13. **f** -- Quotative plural pronoun. Some people make a distinction between *f*, for the plural, and *ní* for the singular.

16. **só** -- One expects *só* here after *kéké* and in 18 after *zo* to make the "relative clause".

17. **jusqu'à** -- As with so many of its occurrences, it is difficult to say what this word contributes here. The meaning 'until' is achieved by the combination of *ngbii* and *sí*. 
18. asi -- This is a generalized use of the subject marker. There are not too many such uses, and one suspects that in some instances there is interference from French. The authentic Sango way of saying 'in the morning' or 'when it was morning' is ndé ade where ndé is a noun and ade a verb.

Questions

1. Where did the girls go?
2. Where did they sleep?
3. What did the local villagers tell these girls?
4. What effect did fear have on the girls who stayed in the house?
5. Who gave them food to eat?
6. How many nights were the girls at this place?

Model Sentences

1. Tí kíringó ní, tó sí na yá tí da na bì (11) 'It was night when we returned to the house'.
2. Sí na kótóró só tó lángó da só (17) 'We arrived at the village where we were sleeping'.
3. Ala mú na tó tí tí te (19) 'They gave us something to eat'.
4. tó goe na tere tó ngu tó gí ásusu (3) 'We went to
the river to fish'.

5. *I lón dó na place ni* (8) 'We left that place'.

6. *Kótá yama atambio na li tí da* (8) 'Large animals climb on the roof of the house'.

7. *I zía ámēngé tí wále na vá tí da* (10) 'We left the girls in the house'.

8. *Akótá kēkē atí na sése* (16) 'Large trees fell down'.

9. *Ala lângó na téré tí i* (18) 'They slept (or lived) next to us'.
ELEVEN

Making a Living (N 45)

1 Bon, f dutí na kótóró só, f doit ti sárángó koa ti yáká (....). 2 Yáká ti sindi 1 sára, yáká ti kárákó 1 sára, yáká ti gozo 1 sára, yáká ti kufu 1 sára. 3 Bon, koa ni 1 wara gi na nginza ake koa ti yáká ti f. 4 Bon, na pekó (....), mbení koa ni. 5 Na pekó ni tongana l'impôt atí gi na sése, f commencer ti goe na la chasse (tí) gbánda. 6 I sára la chasse, f fàa yama, f kíri, gá asára l'impôt na gbé kótóró. 7 Bon, mbunzú 'vení amú na 1 coup de main ti sárángó nginza ni. 8 Mais 1 bata mbunzú nzonf. 9 Ngbangati gbé ti kótóró agá nzonf na 1 ngbangati mbunzú, sì 1 sára na ni. 10 Tongana mbunzú pepe, f doit ti sára kótóró pepe. 11 Mbunzú aleke kótóró na téré ti. 1, sì 1 bata gi mbunzú.

Translation

1 Well, since we are here in the village, we must engage in garden work. 2 We make sesame gardens; we make peanut gardens; we make manioc gardens; we make kufu gardens. 3 Well, the work which brings us money is our farm work. 4 Well, another work .... 5 Later (in more recent years), when taxation came to this country, we began to hunt by net. 6 We hunted and killed animals
and brought them home. 7 Well, the white man has helped us to earn money. 8 We have treated the white man well. 9 The reason is that our village (or country) has become good because of the white man, for whom we work. 10 If there were no white men, we could not make a country. 11 The white man has improved the country for us, so we keep the white man (in our country).

Notes

1. doit tí -- There appears to be no difference in meaning between a verb phrase and a nominalized verb phrase after the connective tí. Compare 7 and 10.

2. kufu -- This plant has not been identified.

3. yáká tí sindí -- By placing the object before the verb one gets the meaning 'as for...', that is, one places emphasis on the expression. In this context ñérá yáká tí sindí would be very prosaic.

4. koa ní ṇ̃̄̄wa -- Because of ake which follows, this phrase is not to be taken as a "relative clause" without só between koa ní and ṇ̃̄̄wa. The un inverted sentence is: ṇ̃̄̄wa nginzá na koa ní 'we get money from the work'. Consult grammatical notes for an explanation of this use of na.

5. tí 'fall' -- Although the English translation has 'come', it would not make much sense in Sango to use gá
here. In other expressions, ti means a sudden or unexpected arrival, as one might imagine from its other meaning 'fall'. Thus: turugu aga ati na li ti aya 'Soldiers came upon them'; fáde téné ni ati na li ti mo 'The blame will fall on you'. gi -- In contexts such as this one this word does not mean 'just' or 'only', but it is difficult to say what it does mean. Compare also sentences 3 and 11.

6. gbé kótóró -- A speaker of English would simply say kíri na kótóró, which is also possible in Sango, but in some instances Sango is more specific than English, especially with locative expressions. It is also possible to say gbé ti and và instead of gbé.

9. i sára na ni -- This has been translated 'for whom we work', but perhaps this clause means 'we make our village (or, country) with them', and there are even other possibilities. The problem lies in identifying the meaning of sára, which by itself is almost an empty verb, and the nominal antecedent for ni.

Questions

1. What kinds of gardens are made?
2. What do people get from their gardens?
3. What is done with the meat when animals are killed?
4. Why has the country become better?
5. Why are white men allowed to stay in the country?
TWELVE

Threatened by a Young Buffalo (N49)

1 Téné só mbi yi ti tene ake téné ti mbénf tene ti gágóá.

2 Na mbénf lá mbi leke likongó ti mbi nzonf, mbi goe na ngonda tís gi mbénf gágóá, téné ti kása asára mbi míngi. 2 Awe, mbi yi ti goe, mbi wara géré ti álá.

4 Na mbi eke gi álá, mbi yi ti báa, mbénf kété ni asi gígí.

5 Agá, lo yi ti sára berá ngangó na mbi.

6 Na tongaso mbi monter kéké, na lo kíri. 7 Mais adú lo, lo sára gi lángó ókó, lángó óse pépe, sí lo ngbá ti sára berá na mbi só. 8 Na akótá ni angbá ti báa lo. 9 Na lo kíri encore, mbi descendre tís goe, lo gá na mbi. 10 Na mbi kíri, mbi lónó na kéké encore. 11 Lo kíri, lo goe, lo dutí. 12 Na akótá ni ake báa lo.

13 Na tongaso mbi tene, yi só ayí ti sára tongana .

14 Na mbi gi bé ti mbi míngi, mbi tene, akótá ni ake, mais gi kété kété ni só adú lo fadé fadesó, géré tís lo akpínga pépe, mais lo laá asára ngangó na mbi. 15 Tongaso fadé mbi sára tongana yé. 16 Tongaso mbi kánga bé ti mbi, mbi tene, fadé mbi tara encore lége otá ni. 17 Na mbi goe.

18 Lo gá. 19 Na otá ni só lo yi ti mú mbi blání.
The story I want to tell is a buffalo story. One day I prepared my spear well, and I went to the bush to hunt down a buffalo, because I was very hungry for (meat) sauce. When it was ready and I had just set out, I found their tracks. And as I was hunting them, to my surprise, a young one appeared. He came and wanted to fight hard with me.

So I climbed a tree and he went back. But he had just been born, he was just a day old, not even two, and here he was picking a fight with me. The big ones just watched him. When he had gone back again, I came down to go away, but he came to me. Once again I climbed back into the tree. He went away again and sat down. And the big ones were watching him.

So I said, "How is this thing going to turn out?" And I thought hard and said, "There are big ones, but this very small one who has just been born, whose legs are not even steady, yet he's the one who's giving me a hard time. So what am I going to do?" So I screwed up my courage and said, "I'll try a third time." And I went (down). He came. This third time he really came close to getting me.
Notes

1. *tény tý* -- The narrator apparently is doubling up his expressions, using both *tény sog* ... *ake tény tý* and *téré 'fable'. It would be better to eliminate *tény tý* altogether; this is what was done for the translation. *téré* -- Notice that the tones of this word are different from those in the word *téré 'body'.

2. *leke likongo 'fix spear'* -- This is a general expression, for *leke* is used of fixing, preparing, arranging anything. *leke yángá tý likongo* would mean 'sharpen a spear'.

3. *fí tý* -- Notice the different uses of this expression in sentences 1, 3, 4, and 5. In 1 and 5 there is the meaning 'want'; in 3 there is the meaning 'be about to' do something; with the verb *báa*, as in 4, the meaning is generally 'unexpectedly' or 'to one's surprise'.

5. *beré* -- See Text N57, sentence 1, for comment on this word.

6. *kíri* -- This verb generally means to return to a place away from where one speaks, therefore 'to go back' and not 'come back'.

7. Since the people of the C.A.R. have until very recently had virtually no practical knowledge of cattle, we can assume that this man's guess as to the age of the buffalo is wrong. It is not considered at all cowardly
to run away from a dangerous animal, and a young buffalo is viewed with the same respect as an older one.

10. **lóndó** — The translation is free. The man is actually saying that he stood up in the tree. It probably was too small for him to be able to sit on a limb.

19. **na** — This is to be translated 'and' and not 'on' (where *oté ni* would be used substantively).

**Questions**

1. What did the man do before going hunting?
2. Why did he want to go hunting?
3. What did the buffalo want to do to him?
4. What did the man do when he saw the buffalo?
5. What did the other buffalo do while the small one was at the tree?
6. How many times did the man climb the tree?

**Model Sentences**

1. *Téné só mbi yi tí téné ake téné tí gégo* (1) 'The story I want to tell is about buffalo'.
2. *Nzala tí kása asára mbi míngi* (2) 'I am very hungry for meat'.
3. *Mbi yi tí goe, mbi wara géré tí álá* (3) 'I had
just started out when I found their tracks.

4. Mbi yi ti ba, wbeni kete ni asil gigi (5) 'All of a sudden a small one appeared'.

5. Lo kiri, lo goa, lo duti (14) 'He went back and waited'.
THIRTEEN

When I was a Child (N56)

1 Téné so mbi yi ti fa fadeso ake téné aó, tongana mbi de mérenge.
2 Tongana mbi de mérenge, álala mbi ti sára kusára ti mbéní makunzi. 3 Na tongana mbi ake sára kusára, mbéní lá, mbi fatiguer mingi, mbi ké ti goe. 4 Na kapita ti mérenge só abata áni agá ti gi mbi.
5 Na tongana mbi húnzi na da, na peko ti ta ti mamá, na tongana kapita só abata áni agá ti gi mbi, na lo éré mbi, Caleb, Caleb. 6 Na mbi tene, ake ze wa só aéré mbi na gígi. 7 Ti bé ti mbi atene, peut-être ake éta ti mbi só mbi na lo i sára nglá lá kóé laa lo gá ti éré mbi.
8 Na tongaso fade mbi sára téné sí lo kái. 2 Teneti tongana mbi ngbá ti sára téné, sí kapita agá ti má, fade lo gá ti gbó mbi. 10 Mais andáa ake ze so só agá ti gbó mbi laa, na mbi hínga pepe, sí mbi sára téné awe so.
11 Na lo éré mbi mbéní, Caleb, Caleb. 12 Mbi tene, mo eke zo wa. 13 Mo hínga pepe só mbi húnzi ti goe na yáká ti te kárakó? 14 Encore mo gá ti gi mbi na téné wala yë.
15 Na tongana lo má tongaso awe, atene, mais mbi laa mbi gá ti gbó so awe ape? 16 Na tongana mbi má tongaso, bé ti mbi aso mingi, mbi tene, teneti ye mbi sára téné.
17 Na tongasó lo mú mbi, agoe na ní na yáká. 18 Na lo goe apíka mbi, atene, tenétí yë mbi sì gigi na l'appel ape. 19 Mbi tene, lá só mú fatiguer míngi, sì mbi yì tì goe tì te kàráko. 20 Na lo tene, non, mo ske zo só mo sára kíríkiri. 21 Na be tì mbi aso sì míngi. 22 Mbi tene, tenétí yë, yì ake tongasó na mbi.

23 Na peko ní kété, mbi gë lége tì zìa. 24 Mbi gë lége tì zìa tì sì gigi l'appel só. 25 Na mbi goe dutì nà mën kevé babé tì mbi só lo eke catéchiste.

26 Na tongana mbi goe awe, lo mú mbi tì sára classe.

27 Na tongana lo fa classe na mbi ngú otá, mbi hìnga tì dìko na yàngá tì Kare. 28 Só ake syllabaire na yàngá tì Kare. 29 Na tongana mbi hìnga awe, mbi mú mbétì tì sango tì dìko sèngé. 30 Mbénì zo afa na mbi pepe.

31 Só ake tongana téne só mbi de mèrènè.

Translation

1 The story I want to tell now is about when I was still a child.

2 When I was still a child, they took me to work for a certain (village) headman. And as I was doing the work, I was tired one day and refused to go (to work).

4 And the overseer of children who supervised us came to look for me.

5 And as I was hiding in the house behind mother's...
pots, as the overseer who supervised us came looking for me, he called me, "Caleb, Caleb." 6 I said, "Who's calling me outside?" 7 My thought was that perhaps it was my buddy with whom I always played who had come to call me. 8 If so I would tell him to be quiet. 9 Because if I continued to talk, and the overseer happened to hear, he would come to grab me. 10 But it turned out to be the person who had come to grab me, and I didn't know it and so I had spoken out like that.

11 And he called me again, "Caleb, Caleb." 12 I said, "Who are you? 13 Don't you know that I've hidden to go to the garden to eat peanuts? 14 Or have you come to cause me trouble or what?"

15 And when he heard this, he said, "Isn't it I who have come to grab you?" 16 And when I heard this, I was very angry; "Why did I speak out?"

17 So he grabbed me and took me to the garden. 18 And he went and beat me and asked why I didn't go out for roll call. 19 I said, "Today I was very tired, so I wanted to go to eat peanuts." 20 And he said, "No, you're someone who misbehaves." 21 And I was very angry. 22 I said, "Why are things like this with me?"

23 A little later I sought a way to quit. 24 I sought a way to quit having to go out for roll call. 25 So I went to live with a certain uncle of mine who was a lay preacher.
26 And when I had gone, he put me in school. 27 And when he had taught me for three years, I could read in Kare. 28 That is, the primer in the Kare language. 29 And after I knew how, I took Sango books to read without any trouble. 30 No one taught me.

31 This is like a story about when I was still a child.

Notes

1. téné só — Followed as it is by a tongana clause, this "relative clause" does not seem to be grammatical. The translation given here is a paraphrase. The use of tongana in 31 is also ungrammatical.

2. múmbi — There used to be a great deal of forced labor in one form or another. The village or canton "chiefs" ("chef de village," "chef de canton"; makunzi and canton respectively) were in a sense bureaucrats appointed by the local French administrators. Among their perquisites was free labor conscripted from the villages. Their authority was exercised through the kapita (sentence 4) 'overseer' who was a kind of policeman without pay. The will of the administration was enforced also through the official legal channels (police department and courts) and the soldiers (Garde Republicaine).

3. tongana — The context makes it clear that the
incident took place during the time when he was a conscripted laborer.

5. áni — This pronoun and a few other constructions indicate that the narrator is a Protestant. húnzi — Some people confuse this verb, which means 'to finish off', and hónde which is the more correct one for 'to hide'.

6. aske zo wa só — This is probably not good Sango although it is grammatically correct. An alternative is: zo wa aéré mbi na gígí zo wa.

7. mbi na lo — Notice the recapitulation of the coordinate subject in 1. The use of laa here and in 10 is characteristic of Sango. Notice how it reinforces aske.

9. só — Notice the two uses of this verb, the first with the meaning 'should happen to' and the second with its literal meaning of 'come'.

10. mais andáa — This is an example of the way French loanwords reinforce Sango connectives, for both of these words have an adversative meaning. só — This sentence-final use of só is hard to translate.

13. só — If this word introduced the clause, it would have the meaning 'since', but it is not clear what its function here is. It is probably an error in imitation of the speech of missionaries, because pépé is also misplaced; it is supposed to negate the whole sentence and not just the principal verb. But it would take considerable modification to make this sentence grammatical.
14. **encore** -- This word is used where one expects *mo kfr*. The sense is: 'I have hidden myself, but you turn around and expose me'.

15. **awe** -- The perfective marker is to be taken with *gâ* and not *gâgâ*.

17. **goe na ni** -- This is a typical use of the determinant *ni* after a person has already been identified. Thus, one would not generally say *lo mû mbi goe na mbi*.

18. **l'appel 'the roll-call'** -- Conscription labor used to have to appear for daily roll-call.

20. **sô** -- In the "relative clause" here and in 25 a pronoun (*mo and lo*) is used with the verb instead of the subject marker *gâ*. There seems to be no difference in meaning between the two constructions.

24. **sâ gâgâ** -- Notice omission of *na* (of 18).
Deceived by a Woman (N57)

1 Téné só mbi yî ti fa ake téné tî berâ só asâra na babá tî mbi giriri.

2 Na mbênî kótôrô ake só asâra berâ na kótôrô tî mbi. 3 Na âzo tî kótôrô nî, na kótôrô tî mbi nî, âla yî téré pêpê.

4 Na mbênî zo tî famille tî î ûko, babá tî mbi, ërë tî lo ake Rebenzi, lo goe tî sâra ndeko na mbênî wâle tî kótôrô nî kâ. 5 Na tongana lo goe tî sâra awe, kôli tî wâle nî afâa könôo, na âleke awe, tîtene ahândà na babá tî mbi na nî, sf âla lîngbi fëa lo.

6 Na tongana babá tî mbi nî agoe tôngbi na lo, lo fa ndo tî bôngbi na lo. 7 Tongana lo goe tî pîka gozo, na kôzo nî, lo zîa gozo nî na ngû. 8 Na lo tene tongana lâ tî pîka gozo nî, fade lo tî babá tî mbi na place nî.

9 Na tongana lo goe, lo sâra téné nî na kôli tî lo, atene, mbi wara wato só awe.

10 Na tongana kôli tî lo amá tongaso, lo fëa könôo nî, na wâle nî atô, na lo âleke kôë.

11 Na tongana lo fà ndo nî na gbé tî kêkê, na tongana lo gâ tî sukûlâ gozo nî, na kôli tî lo atene na âwato tî babá. 12 Na âla gâ, âla hûnzi na téré tî ndo só lo fa.

13 Na tongana âzo só ahûnzi, na Rebenzi só ake babá tî
78

mbi ahlína aye, na ála gá na bozo ti ála. 14 Bozo ni ake
ngása só ála fáa, na ála lungúla póró, ála aára na bozo,
na ála zia likongó, na yi tí berá ti ála kóó. 15 Na ake
na téré ti ála 'vení.

16 Na tongana ála gá na wále só, na lo tene, kózo ni
ála te kóndo só, sí ála língbi bóngbi na tàngé òko.
17 Na tongana babá ti mbi só ayé pepe, na lo bóngbi kása
na kóbe ni, lo zia na bozo. 18 Na tongana lo goe ti
toucher wále ni, wále ni asára gi berá, titene lo gbó
babá ni, sí áwato ti lo álíngbi fáa lo.

19 Na tongasó, tongana awato ti lo amá dé kóngó ti
wále, na tongana ála yi tí gá, babá ni alóndó na likongó
ti lo, na riga ti lo, na zembe ti lo. 20 Na tongana lo
goe ti fáa mbóní zo ôko, átanga ni kóó apné. 21 Na lo
kamáta mbóní zo óse, lo zia na mbáge ti gáti, na zia na
mbáge ti kotí, na lo kpé lo sí na kótóri ti vin ká. 22
Ála zia kótá kéké na géré ti lo.

23 Na tongasó, téné só agá wángó ti áni, na álíngbi, títene, tongana wále ahánda áni na lége ti sárá: gó yi
tongasó, álíngbi áni báa téré ti áni 'vení kózo ni, áni
bóngbi na wále ni.

24 Só ake ndá ti téné ti mbi.

Translation

1 The story I want to tell is a story about a fight
in which a paternal relative of mine was involved long ago.

2 There was a village which was on bad terms with my village. 3 The people of that village and of my own village did not like each other.

4 A certain member of our family, my paternal relative whose name was Rebenzi, went to have an affair with a woman of that village. 5 And when he had gone to do this, the husband of the woman killed a chicken and prepared it to trick my relative with it so they could kill him.

6 And when my father went and met her, she showed him where he could make love to her. 7 When she went to pound manioc, first she put the manioc into the water. 8 She said that on the day for pounding the manioc she would meet my relative at the place.

9 When he went away, she told her husband, "I've trapped the enemy."

10 And when her husband heard this, he killed the chicken, and his wife cooked it and fixed it all up.

11 And when she had shown (him) the place under the tree and had come to remove the manioc, her husband told my relative's enemies about it. 12 They came and hid themselves beside the place she had indicated. 13 When these people had hidden and Rebenzi, who was my relative, didn't know about it, they brought their pouches. 14 The pouches were (made of) goats they had killed and skinned and had made into pouches, and they put spears and all of
their weapons in them. 15 These were right at their sides.

16 When (my relative and) the woman came, she said that they should eat the chicken first and then they could go to bed together. 17 When this relative of mine refused, he combined the sauce and the dough together and put them in a pouch. 18 And when he started to fondle the woman, the woman put up a fight so as to grab my relative so his enemies could kill him.

19 At this, when his enemies heard the woman's cries and as they were about to come, my relative arose with his spear and his throwing-knife and his knife. 20 When he went to kill one of the people, the rest ran away. 21 But he caught two of them and putting one on his left side and one on his right side, he ran to our village there. 22 They put big pieces of wood [that is, stocks] on his legs.

23 So this story has become a warning to us and (to) children that when a woman tempts us by doing something like this, we must take care of ourselves first before sleeping with the woman.

24 This is the end of my story.

Notes

1. berä --- Although pīka berä and sāra berä mean 'wage war' or 'fight in battle', the word berä is often
used rather loosely from our point of view. From the
point of view of one of the parties, threatening
behavior is looked upon as war. Similarly faa 'to kill'
is used of fights and of bad language where no one has
actually been killed. fa téné 'to show, to tell'
Here it means 'to talk about'.

3. yiténé -- Notice the reflexive use of téné 'body'.

4. ūka 'one' -- Notice the position of the numeral.
It would be wrong to have it either after zo or famille;
it is in construction with the whole noun phrase. ndeko
'friend' -- Some people may still use this for 'friend'
in referring to someone of the same sex, but it seems to
be used now primarily of a companion in sexual relations,
hence the expression sara ndeko.

5. ñla 'they' -- This pronoun refers to the people
from the other village.

6. bongbi na 'join up to' -- The verb alone means
'combine' and is used transitively and intransitively.

7. This sentence does not seem to fit between
sentences 6 and 8. Perhaps it is a false start. It is
not clear exactly what the sequence of events is and
whether the time of the soaking of the manioc is at all
important. It takes a long time to process manioc; the
steps are the following: digging up the tubers, removing
the skins with a knife, putting the tubers to soak (in
a large basket) in a pond (zína na ngú), after about three
days removing the tubers (sukúla gozo) and then spreading them to dry in small pieces, and finally pounding and sifting the dried pieces so as to separate the fibers to make the flour (píka gozo). In telling the man to come back on the day she had to pound the manioc (sentence 8), she had an excuse to be gone from the village for a good part of the day, ample time for the rendezvous they were arranging.

9. sára téné 'to talk, sára téné na 'to talk with someone', but with the determinant ni 'to tell someone something'. mbi -- This is reported in direct speech. Ni would have been used in indirect speech.

11. wato -- This word for enemy and kamáta for mú (21), ani for 'we', indicate that the narrator is probably a Protestant. babá -- Kinship terms can be used without a possessive expression (for example, 'my').

12. ndo só -- Notice that ndo is used with its "basic" meaning of 'place'.

14. bozo -- It is not clear what these pouches have to do with the attempted ambush except that they were used to carry some of the weapons. The narrator certainly made a mistake in saying that the spears were inside the pouches. But perhaps the error is ours in not understanding what zia 'to put' refers to. By having a new sentence begin Na ála zía likongó and ending it with what is now sentence 15, we get something that makes a little more sense,
although mú 'take' would be better than zía: and they placed spears and all of their weapons (by them), and these were at their sides'.

16. ála -- The anticipatory plural to indicate both the woman and the man. Lo gá na wále sò would mean 'He came with (or 'He brought') this woman'.

16. na tanga -- For na ndó tanga: 'on top of a bed'. This is clearly out of place, for there would not even be a mat at that place! Even though ôko immediately follows tanga, it does not mean 'one bed' but 'together'. Compare: Ala goe ôko 'They went together'.

17. kása -- This was the chicken sauce or stew to be used with the kóbe, the dough. Since this was a clandestine meeting, she would have brought the food with her, hidden in the empty basket in which she would put the flour to be made that day. It would not have have been difficult at all to bring food in this way. It is difficult, however, to understand how the man could put the food into his pouch. In the old days men generally went everywhere with leather pouches slung over their shoulders. Today, they are carried by elderly men, but one sees them uncommonly.

18. toucher wále -- This expression has definite sexual connotations. It may be a euphemism, like bôngbi na (sentence 6) and léngó na, for 'to have intercourse with'.

19. dé kóngó -- This is an error in imitation of the
speech of missionaries. He might have used toto 'to cry, cry out' or a nominalized form of the expression, namely, déngó kóngó.

20. átanga ní -- Notice that although tanga means 'the rest', the plural is used for individuated plurality.

21. lo kpé lo sí -- The verb sí 'to arrive' is used to indicate that he arrived at his destination, which is not clear in the English 'flee to'. Although kpé na is possible, it has the sense of 'flee in the direction of'.

ání -- That is, 1.

22. It is not clear who was put in the stocks. Because of the moral of the anecdote (sentence 23), we can assume that it was the man who got into trouble by abducting two of his enemies.

23. agá wángó tí ání -- This seems to be bad Sango for which missionaries are responsible. One does not expect a possessive expression 'our warning' here but rather 'a warning to us', as it was translated. Another Protestantism is alíngblí plus a clause to indicate obligation. One should use instead asé téne tí f.
FIFTEEN

Murder of a Lover (W77)

1 Mbénf kóli óko ake. 2 Kóli sé, lo kapita wále tì lo óko. 3 Babá tì lo avo na lo wále. 4 Tongasó, na pekó ní, wále ní agá na yángá da tì lo awa, na lo kíri tì goe tì gi mbéní wále tì ñta tì le. 5 Tongasó, na mbéní famille tì lo awara lo, atenge, lo sára mbéní yi só encore pepe. 6 Na lo më téne só, lo gá na kótoró, lo dutí jusqu'à, lo kú tenet' nze èse. 7 Na lo kíri tì sára ngiá na wále só encore.

8 Tongasó, tongana kóli ní amá téne ní awa, acommencer tì gi lo na zembe jusqu'à awara lo pepe. 9 Na lo kpe na Bangui, lo lango na Bangui jusqu'à dimanche èse. 10 Lo kíri na kótoró. 11 Na ála kíri awara téré na wále só encore na yá tì ngonda.

12 Tongasó kóli só agoe tì kánga wótoró, ayí tì gá, ála 'vení ake bôngbi só. 13 Na kóli tì wále só afáa lo, abí lo na sése na kóía.

14 Só atenge lo sára aioní awa. 15 Mais lo lìngbi tì má téne ní pepe.

Translation

1 There was a man. 2 This man took a wife (in marriage).
His father paid for a wife for him. Later, after the woman had come to live with him (as wife), he turned around and made advances to the wife of one of his relatives. So one of his relatives came to him and told him not to do this again. He listened, then came home where he stayed for two months. Then he resumed being familiar with this woman.

When the husband heard of this, he sought a way to knife him, but he did not succeed even after some time. The man fled to Bangui where he stayed for two weeks. He then returned home. Again the man and woman met, (this time) in the bush. It happened that the husband had gone to install his beehives, and as he came, he found none other than the man and woman in union. The woman's husband killed the man and threw him to the ground dead.

In other words, the man had done evil. He was not one to listen to advice.

Notes

2. The expressions kamáta wále and mú wále are synonymous for 'to marry'; vo wále 'buy woman' refers to the giving of the bride-price, which consists of money and articles of clothing, chickens, goats, utensils, and so on, some of which goes to the girl's parents, but most
of which goes to her male paternal relatives. Among some groups the bride-price is paid exclusively by the paternal relatives, and the young man only works for the future in-laws.

4. **ga na vangé tì de** is the usual expression for indicating when a bride takes up residence with her husband. **gi wále** 'look for woman' is used of young men who are trying to select a bride for themselves or of married men seeking to establish adulterous relations; with the latter sense **gi kóli** also occurs.

5. **atene lo** — After the verb **teng** 'say' the connective **na** is often omitted; **mbénf yí só** — The function of **mbénf** here may be 'like this', that is, 'do anything like this'.

6. **Jusqu'à** — Here it probably is used like **ngbí** 'for a while'.

7. **sára ngái** — This expression has a wide range of meaning: 'to play', 'to have a good time', as well as the illicit kind of behavior indicated here.

8. **Jusqu'à** — Here it may again have the meaning 'for a while', but in the next sentence it is used as it is in French.

11. **kíri aware** — The verb **kíri** is used here with the meaning 'again' or 'resuming where something was left off'. Notice the use of the anticipatory plural: **ata aware téré** means 'they meet', but when another person is mentioned, as here with **na wále só** 'with this woman', the
plural pronoun is best translated with a coordinate phrase in English.

12. kânga wôtoro 'tie bees' — This refers to the installation of beehives in trees. They are generally long, made of bark or woven like a basket and then covered.

13. abi lo na sêse — This has been translated rather literally here. The whole clause after fàa lo does little more than dramatize the act of killing. But there are many other expressions in which bi na sêse occurs: for example, lo dû mérêngé abi lo na sêse 'she gave birth to a child.'

14. ñêngbi 'to be able' — The man could not obey or heed counsel, that is, he refused to do so.

Questions

1. When did the man begin to make advances to the other woman?
2. Whose wife was this other woman?
3. What did one of the man's relatives tell him?
4. After two months what did the man begin to do?
5. What did the husband try to do to the man?
6. Where did the man flee to?
7. Where was the husband coming from when he came upon his wife with the man?

Model Sentences

1. Babá tí lo avo na lo wále (3) 'His father bought a wife for him'.
2. Lo kiri tí sára ngié na wále só (7) 'He resumed being familiar with this woman'.
3. Ala wara téré na wále só na vá tí ngonda (11) 'He and the woman met in the bush'.
4. Lo vf ti gá, óla yéné aksé bôngbi só (12) 'As he came, whom should he meet but them in union'.