

Interview with a Farefari woman (R), aged 47, living in Legon Staff Village, on the afternoon of Sunday 22 May 2005.

Interviewer: Ellen Mma Atanga (E), assisted by Arwen Kimmell. EMA's transcription, with spellings slightly normalized.

E Daanɔ bem n boe kala? Koo ben n tabi daan hu suure Ankara wa keʔa pue?
What are the problems here? What troubles have you experienced staying here in Accra?

Woo hu wa-n bo ni ti tɪŋa ha la kan ani ni bala koo?
Like if you had been back at home it wouldn't have been so?

R Woo Akra, hu mi ti kala-ŋ dage ti tɪŋa. Ti tɪŋa de la tɪŋa.
Accra, you know that this place is not our home. Our homeland is our homeland.
Ti tɪŋa ane suŋa gana kala. Akra daanɔ la boe se'em.
Our homeland is better than this. How there are troubles in Accra!
Akra ke'a tɔi me woo
Staying in Accra is so difficult.

E Tɔ, ti la deʔa [na] la kamaa wani wani? Ligeri bɔba koo?
Well, so how is it difficult? The money aspect?

R ʔi: ligeri bɔba la dia bɔba. Mam n ze wa n wan ka to'om n kan di.
Yes, the money and the food aspects. As I stand here now, if I don't work I won't eat.
Hu nyɛ ya koo? Séé hù wá-n íhegè, hù mìa wá-n ìŋɛ wàhála tee ti
Have you seen? You have to get up and struggle a lot
nyaa wa-n di dia.
before [you] get to eat.

E Gee hu n kɛ'eri kala-n wa hu sira nereba tabi wa'am na kɛ'era la ho?
But as you are staying here, have your husband's relations ever come to stay with you?

R ʔi: n sira nereba kɛ' ya.
Yes, my husband's relatives have stayed.

E Tɪ la daa an wani ya tɪŋa soka?

And how was it among you?

R Tɪ tɪŋa soka mi̯a de la zabere mi̯a sɔɔ tɪ tire zabera gee kɛ'era.

We were always fighting among ourselves and we were fighting and living together.

E Tɪ se'em daa boe bini [bobini] iŋe tɪ la daam hu suuri paa?

And did someone [among them] do [sthng] and it particularly disturbed you?

R ʔɪ: ba daa, ʔɪ: daaŋɔ dee, daaŋɔ daa bo m... daaŋɔ boe

Yes they did, yes as for trouble, there was trouble.

E Kamaa bem?

In what form?

R ʔa ba ta'an yeti budaa la bo hu ti hu n ka bota ti hu bo ba.

Ah, they can (perhaps) say that them man gives to you and then you don't want to give (anything) to them.

ʔɪ: gee ka mi ti fun mi itɪ wahala la budaa la tɪ ya dita.

Yes but (they) don't know that you are also struggling with your husband so that the two of you eat.

Bama ka mi bala woo. Bama ni tɛ'esi tɪ daanse'ere budaa ni isege

They don't know that. They always think that maybe the man always gives

dike bo fu gee ti hu ka bota fu bo

to you but you do not want to give them

E Se'em bo me daa bo na bini zuura yaaha neno?

Was there anyone amongst them that stole meat from the soup?

R ʔii anyina koraa daa boe ma n duge zɛero ze'ele ma ni ta paana ti a yaase neno

Yes there used to be one (child) when I cook soup he removed all the meat

la zɛero la paan wuuha gee dike zɛero ze'ele. Ti fu wan n soke ã

from it and I came home from sales to meet the soup without meat. When you ask him

ti a ki'ihe ti la lebege ti la dage eŋa ti fu me mina ti la dela

He will deny and it turns to be that he is not the one but you know very well that he is

eŋa nɔɔ iti bala. Fu nye nyaa? La ane se'em n bala. N sira keema

The very person who does that. Have you seen? It is like that. My husband's elder

bia daa kɛ'era kala, a daa ni yehe tee la yu'uŋɔ, a ka

brother's child used to stay here, he used to go out from morning till night,

kē'ere kalam na. A wan ta kē ne ti fu yeti fu yele ti la lebege
 he never came home early. When he came and you wanted to talk it turned to be a
 zabere la lebega zabere yiri wa, ti ya tara taaba, a kan isege
 fight. It turns into a fight in this house, and you will be quarrelling, he wouldn't get up
 tuum boe fu, a kan pii sagero bo fu. A 'ake ko'om bo fu me, la labege
 to work for you, he wouldn't sweep rubbish for you. To fetch water for you to, it is a
 yele. Ti a bona bona bona bona lebegera, lebegera... ti la ta pae, ti ta ze'a, ah
 case. And he was there for a long time doing his own thing and it came to a time,
 ti ba belum bo eja. Bise ti mam noa umi, nme ti noa la ki, gee vaa
 and they should beg for him. Look, my fowl is brooding, beats it to death, and collected
 ka gela lobe base. Lal dike mam pi'o la soo zo yese ti tu
 the eggs and threw them away. (He) took my basket and broom and ran out and we
 digi e teee. Seba, ti ba nye i kesa sa, seba ti ba nye i
 chased him in vain.. Some said that they saw him there, some that they saw him
 kesa ha. Ti, tu doose bini kiye, ta pae asee [Hausa] a ka bo bina, a
 another place. And, we followed to the place, upon reaching there he wasn't there, he
 zo yese bini. Ti tu 'e 'i teee ti ka nye i. Tu nyaa wa tari
 had run out of the place. And we searched for him and didn't see him. We then sent for
 i kiye, ti ba ta nyoke i kiye Pantan. Pantai mia,
 him to be arrested, and sent him to Pantang (mental hospital). From Pantang, we then
 ze'ele bini ti tu nyaa kiye yire.
 returned to the house.

E Nyaa de'a la zolego n daa daan i koo la daa yirege 'i mee?
 Was it madness that disturbed him or it disturbed his head?

R Mam te'esi bala. M mi ti besa .
 I think so. That I can tell.

E A daa nyuuri wii mee?
 Was he smoking marijuana?

R Daanse'ere a paa daa yuure ba me sugera gee tu ka mi.
 Sometimes he might have been smoking without our knowing it.

E Mhmm

R Ah... gee nyaa daa wa'ana na ti ba belum n sira boe 'i, ba belum n sira

Ah, and then it came that, they should beg my husband for him, they beg my husband
bo ï gee eña tue me, ba belum bo ï gee eña tue me. Ti tu
for him that he was wrong. They should beg him and that he has gone wrong. And we
soke ï ti “beni eñe fu?” Ti ba belum bo ï gee eña tue me,
asked him “what happened to you?” That they should beg him and his is wrong,
eña ka bañe ti la nana wa’am bala na. Eña tue me. Bini noo, ti tu tari ï kiñe hospital,
he didn’t know it would be so. It was wrong. It was there that we sent him to hospital
ti daanse’ere bia wa ‘yi be’ere me. Bini ti ba to’e ï biñe.
That maybe the child may be sick. They admitted him there.

E La daa die kamaa ñmaresi sile ?
How many months did it take ?

R La daa ka ba pae ñmarega.
It did not take a month.

E Koo bakwae [Hausa]?
Or a week?

R ?ii, gee ti tu toore yire ti ba nyaa wa’am na tari ï kule tu tiña.
Yes, and we sent a message home and they came to send him home to our land.
Tu tiña mia ti ba da bona bona bona bona, ti ba nyeti ti kamantoosi loore n wa’am na
It was at our home town that they said after a long time, a tomato lorry came
ti ba looda, ti ba looda ita loore la puan, loore la nyeti de isege la,
and they were loading (it), and after they loaded the lorry, the lorry started,
a ka sige gee ti loore la isege. Loore la isege ti a nyaa zom zi’a bini, lu teña.
and he (boy) climbed on. The lorry took off with him on top; fell to the ground.

E Lu tiña na?
Fell to the ground?

R Lu tiña na, nyaa dike a zuo wa...
Fell to the ground, then his head...

E nyaa ñme tiña.
hit the ground.

R A ka ‘isege ye’isa
He did not wake up again.

E Oh, so a yuuj ki me?

Oh, so he died?

R Mhmm

E Mhmm... gaafara

Mm So sorry

Bi kaɲa ma'a n tabi wa'am na ti la de'a daaŋo bee, se'em

Is that the only child who ever came to stay and gave trouble or, did some other
bia me tabi ke la hu ti la lebege daaŋo yire wa.

child ever stay with you and it turned into problems in this house.

R Mam mia taya bia. N ta soo bia paa n me tabe ke kala

My own brother's child. My own brother's child child also stayed here

“de same” daaŋo mia noo. Eɲa me, ti mam ta kiŋe kosego paana. Ti mam ni kiŋe

and it was the same problems. He too, when I returned from selling. We usually return
kosego ta pae kala na la 10 o'clock. Mam paana nye...

from selling and arrive here at 10 o'clock. I arrived to see...

E 10 o'clock yu'uŋo koo?

10 o'clock in the night or?

R Yu'uŋo. Mam paana nye la n taa kala ti ba tara taaba. Ti

Night. I arrived to see a crowd gathered here and they were at each other. And
a tsɛkira bia wa, ka nango'ore, tsɛki i ti ba pɔsera ti

he was strangling this child, squeezed his neck and when they were separating (them)

a ka sakera. Ti mam koŋe gee dike pi'o wa ze'ele gee tasi i. Mam yeti Baba, ben so

he refused. And I could only put my basket down and shouted at him. I said, Baba, why
ti fu ita bala? Base ti eɲa kan base. Base, bem iŋe? Oh, ti mam dike

are you doing that? Stop, and he wouldn't stop. Stop, what happened? Oh, I put

pi'o wa ze'ele gee kpeta, gee kpeta. Ti tu waaha kpeta, kpeta ta

the basket down and with others struggling and struggling. And we all struggled to

ga'e a nu'o base bia mia nu'o. Ti bem iŋe? Ii, eɲa yese me. Ba kiŋe

release his hand from my child's neck. What happened? Yes, he went out. They went

besa kala ti a ze'a la nera sosa. Ti a toe la nera

Where she was standing with someone conversing. That she collected the person's

liga [Hausa] nye.

shirt and wore it.

E Hm

R A bem n de ã ti a toe a liga nye di za'a m bala, n de ñme'a la.

What is the person to her, that she should collect his shirt and wear. That was all that brought about the beating.

E Biseka n daa...

The child who...

R Mam mia tã sɔɔ bia la?

My own bosom brother's child?

E Eña mia daa dela yuuma aɓe? Fu tã sɔɔ bia la, eña daa dela yuuma aɓe?

He himself was how old? Your brother's child, how old was he?

R N tisi ti a wan pae...

I think he would be about...

E Eña mia daa dela yuuma aɓe?

He was how old?

R A de buɲkute.

He was a grown-up.

E Buɲkute, kamaa yuuma aɓe?

Grown-up, like how many years?

R Amaa a yuuma la ti n tam, gee, la nam pae a nan nye kamaa 20 years wana..

But I have forgotten his age, but I think he would be about 20 years.

E Gee ti fun bia la ti a daa kegera la me de'a la yuuma aɓe?

And your child that he was strangling is also how old?

R Eña m bala n zĩ ni kala wa.

She is the one sitting here.

E Buɲkute waa?

This grown-up?

R ?ii.

Yes

E Oo, ti a toe la se'em fuo nyε, gee ze'a la ĩ.
Oh, that she collected someone's dress and wore it standing with him.

R Ti a toe nera fuo nyε bo?
That why did she collect someone's dress?
A bem de ĩ ti a toe a fuo nyε?
Who is he to her that she should collect his dress to wear?

E e...e

R ?ii, de za'a m bala woo. Ti a nyaa iŋe bala mia, baase, ti mam sire mε ka sake.
Yes, that is all of it. After he finished doing that, my husband was angry.

Ti eŋa kan nyaŋe kē la ĩ. A pake a lōgero yese.
That he could not live with him. He should pack his things out.

E Mhm.

R Mhm... gee a nan ta dike "trouble" bo eŋa yiri wa. Ti a nyaa pake a
Mm, and he would bring trouble to him in the house. And then he packed his
lōgero kiŋe ta kē'esa Atsimota sa. Nanaana ti mam nyaa wum ti a nyaa boe ti tiŋa sa.
Things and went to stay at Achimota. Now I heard he is at our home town.

E To, eŋa n daa iŋe se'em la, fu mi ti a tā'e tari ni daaŋo wa'am
OK, did you know that what he did could bring troubles
fun la fu sira tiŋa soka?
between you and your husband ?

R ?ii, a tari wa'am mi na m bala.
Yes, he has already brought it.

E La san de ni pōgeseka, a ta'am yele ni ti a dela mam sōo so bia la,
If it were to be a different woman she would have said he is my relation's child,
mam n kan base ti a kiŋe.
I would not allow him to go.

R Daanjo m bala ti a tari wa'am ti puan. Ti la wona la, la dela yetoga ti a tari
It is trouble he has brought between us. It means, that there are problems he has
wa'am ti tiŋa soka bala.
he has brought among us.

E Woo, fu wan deni se'em bot zaba m bala, la kan ani ni sum.
Like, if you were someone who likes fighting, it would not have been good.
Tɔ, la ani sum ti fum me daa baε ya bεke base, ti ba tari bia la kiε.
OK, it is nice that you too understand and left them to send the child away.
Fu nyeti, a mia n daa pun kiε.
You said, he himself even went away.

R ?ii, a miηa nyaa daa kule.
Yes, he himself left.

E Tɔ, ti yeti ti bise la ti tiηa Farefari pɔgesi m bo kala, ba kε'a n ani se'em.
OK, we want to look at how Frafra women staying here are faring.
Fum bise Farefari pɔgesi m bo kala ba ani ηwani .. ba dela buntata duma bee?
How do you see Frafra women who live here.. are they rich?
Ba kε'a Ankara wa puan ani ηwani? La kpe'em me la ka kε bee bem?
What is their stay here in Accra like? Is it difficult staying here?
Fun te'esi la ηwani ηwani? Fun yenzu bisa ti Farefari pɔgesi n boe kala wa,
What do you think? You just consider Frafra women here,
La ani ηwani? Fu yem yenzu kiε sela puan, kamaa ba boηa Ankara wa boηa woo
How is it? Just cast your mind on something, like compare their stay here in Accra to
Ba wan boni ti tiηa sa, la ba n wa'am na bona kala wa. Fu te'esi
how they would be in our homeland there, and how they are here. Do you think
nera woo ti la ana suηa bɔ'ora ba Ankara wa ko?
everybody is living well in Accra?

R Oh daabi [Akan], la dage ba zaa. Ba seba koraa gba tu tiηa, fu wan bona tu tiηa,
Oh no, not all of them. Some of them, even at home, you will be better at home,
La nyani gana kala. Fu wan ta nye ayima koraa gba, tu tiηa nera ta'am wa'am na tara
There is more there. You can meet someone, a person from home can have
gilema le gaηe fu. Nyani la fu, nyaηe tara ligeri. ?ii, ti fu yeti
more respect than you. Be better than you, have more money. Yes, and you would say
fu kε'eri la Ankaraa wa gee tu tiηa nera ni ta wa'am na le nyana fu. Fu nye ya ko?
you live in Accra but someone from home comes and is better than you. You see now?
Fu ta'am nye ti tiηa poka ti a wa'am na ana fine la fu n kε'erε kala la koraa.
You can see a woman from home that she comes and is fine compared to you even.

Fu tē'esi ti koraa gba, ena tun ze'ele la tiŋa wa koraa gba tun wa'am na. Fu nye ya
You would even think she rather is living in this town (Accra). You see now?
koo? Gee ti fu tun ana basaa tiŋa wa. La waasa me dela wahala [Hausa] mia.
And you rather are disorganized in this place. It is all the same problem.
Fu nye ya koo? Fu kan nye fu suure n boti se'em. Fu nye ya?
You see? You can't get your heart's desire. You see?

E Nyaa de'a la tuuma n ka boe ko, koo?
Is it that there is no work?

R Bu, la se'ere ni yese tuune n ka boe. Se'ere ni yese budaasi la puan. Ayima, me,
Some, it is partly due to no work. Partly it is usually from the men. Someone too
ni bona, a ka boti tuuma gee ni ze'a ti budaa la tara kina la bo i.
is always waiting for the man to bring for her.

E Ti a dita.
That she eat.

R Ti a dita. Fu nye ya? La ani se'em bala. La ka ani woo tumam n tiregeri se'em
For her to eat. You see ? That is how it is. It is not like we are struggling here.
wa. Baseba ka ani bala woo. Baseba ni bota ti ba zi'a ti budaa tari na bo ba.
Some people are not like that. Some of them want to sit down for the man to provide.
Budaa la san ka tari na bo ba, ba kan nye. Fu nye ya. Fum bise bana za'a woo wa?
If the man does not bring for them, they don't get. You see. Can you imagine all these?

E Ti la wɔna la ŋwani ŋwani? Kamaa daanse'ere ba zo'e zo'e ka kiŋe sukuu,
And what does that mean ? Like maybe many of them have not been to school,
bii dage bala ?
or is that not it ?

R ?ii, zo'e zo'e, zo'e ka ka kiŋe sukuu. Gee man ze wa, man ka kiŋe
Yes, many many have not gone to school. And as I stand here, I have not gone
sukuu. Amaa, fu tirege gee basi ti la ita fu suja. La ani se'em n bala. to school. But,
you try hard and see that you do wel. That is how it is.

E So baseba bo me ti ba ka kiŋe sukuu gee me bota ti ba koma kiŋe sukuu?
So are there some who haven't gone to school but want their children to go?

R Ba kiŋe sukuu. Fu nye ya ? La ani se'em m bala. Because ma m bo
They should go to school. You see? That is how it is. Because as I am
namesegɔ se'a puan la ma n ka boti m bia me ta wa'am na namese woo
suffering I don't want my child to suffer like
mam iŋe se'em la. Fu nye ya?
I do. You see?

E Fum koose la bem?
What do you sell ?

R Mam koose kodu la sukaam la kok la lɔg-bibibesi. Aa tɔ, fu pon
I sell bananas and groundnuts and coke and small things. Ah well, you even
ni nyeta lɔgerɔ mia. La ice-water duma za'a waa sa.
see the things yourself. And ice-water, all kinds of things.

E Bo Legon sukuu kɔma la? Ti sukuu kɔma la, ba wan ni bo sadoo la
To Legon school children ? And the students, when they go on holidays
fun nyaa ni ita la ŋwani ?
what do you usually do ?

R Bala nyaa de wahala la. Tu ni kina sa, amaa la dage kine sa. Ba pon
That is the problem. We go, but it does not amount to anything. They even
ka le da'ara sela ha. La nyaa ni de'a la wahala sɔɔ. Ban ko'om n kiŋe, ŋwana,
no longer buy anything. It is always only problems. Immediately they go, like this,
tu diti wahala mia, tee ti ba ta paana. Fu wan n kiŋe ba ka n da sesela. Ti fu dike
we suffer, until they return. If you go they would not buy anything. And you put
ze'ele gee kiŋe kule. N yinbeere, paε ka'ε base. Fu le yeti fu zi'ire yiren wa,
it down and go home. Next day, you arrive and pour it away. If you stay in the house,
fu ni ta nye bise, base ti n yese bise ti ban nan n da fii. Zuu ta dige.
you consider, let me go out and try again if they will buy a little. Wait in vain.
Yu'uŋɔ ta lige la ka ba'ase. Ti fu le kuŋe gee ka'ε ba base gee wa'am na lebe zi'a yire.
Night comes, still not finished. And you can only pour it away and come back home.
Ba wa n ta wa'am na mia ti fu εera lagefu ti fu lebe ta da lɔgerɔ ta koose fu ka tari.
When they come back and you try to get money to buy things again to sell, you can't.

E Ai, fu sira me tuni me ?
Ah, is your husband also working?

- R ʔii, gee budaa la mi sujere fii fiisi, ti ba ta wa'am na.
Yes, and the man also helps a little until they come back.
- E Eja mi pon tuna la Legon la?
He also works at Legon ?
- R Legon, ii. Legon la puan. La ani se'em m bala.
Legon, yes. In Legon. That is how it is.
- E Mmh, la ani sum. Fu yi n wan bota ti fu lebe tu tiɲa, koo hu iŋe fu putẽ'ere puan
Mm, it is fine. Then would you like to return to our home, or have you decided
kamaa fu wan daan lebe tu tiɲa?
like you will some day return to our homeland?
- R Ii, tu tiɲa de [laughs], tu boti tu tiɲa lebege.
Yes, home, we want to return to our homeland.
- E Gee dage nanaana wa?
But not now?
- R Dage nanana wa.
Not now.
- E Gee, koma la fa? Bama wan bota ti ba lebe ?
But what about the children? Would they like to return?
- R Koma la de, tu, ai fu n boe, koma la ta zo'e pae
As for the children, we, you know if you are there and the children grow up and
bamiɲa tara ba miɲa, ba waasa nu'a tuune tunam fu n ta kule ta bona sa gee ti bama
get their own lives and they all are working, you can go home and stay, and they
bona kala.
stay here.
- E Mmh. La ani suɲa.
Hmm. It is fine.
- R La ani se'em m bala.
That is how it is.