

Jamsay (Dogon, Mali) tape 2004_03, track A, texts 2004_03_1 to _15, translations

1. Collective hunt
2. Lion
3. Women incite men to hunt
4. Fights with an elephant, a lion, and a leopard
5. Snakes
6. Millet growth stages
7. Introduction of the plow
8. Crop pests
9. After the harvest
10. Relations with Fulbe
11. Origin of Dianwely village
12. Blacksmith caste
13. Blacksmith women
14. Spinning and weaving
15. Sege caste

Jamsay 2004_03_01

Collective hunt

[this text appears as "Text 1" in the published Jamsay grammar, with full interlinear analysis and grammatical commentary, and is not repeated here]

Jamsay 2004_03_02 translation

Encounter with a lion

S: When you-Pl have gone on a collective hunt, did it ever happen that a lion appeared in (=during) it?

(Or) if a leopard appears? That one now (=leopard) [topic], what do you-Pl do with respect to it?

A: When they had gone on a collective hunt, we heard (once) that a lion appeared (during a hunt). We have also heard that a leopard (once) appeared. But it never appeared in front of me (=in my direct experience). Ever since I first learned about (=got my first exposure to) going on the hunt, (based on what) I myself have learned (=observed), when a collective hunt has come (=been started), it has not (ever) happened that I didn't go on the collective hunt, that it passed me by, while I was at home (=in the village).¹

¹ I.e. 'I have never failed to go on a collective hunt if it was organized while I was in the village at the time.'

But in our land, in the village where I am (living), in a collective hunt that I have gone to (=participated in), it has never happened that a lion appeared or that a leopard appeared, but I did once see a hyena appear. I have seen that a true hyena had appeared. As for that one (=hyena), it ran away, we didn't get it.

In my hearing (=I heard that) in that district of Mondoro, when they (=hunters) had gone on a collective hunt, a lion appeared. When the lion appeared, the lion that appeared, when it lay down,¹ a person [focus] was walking (along) and came upon it. (Recognizing) how he had gone and come upon it, that a collective hunt [focus] had come (=begun), having encountered the lion, (the thought of) him(-self) leaving it (=lion) and continuing on his way did not please him ('his soul').

It happened that he had a rifle slung (over his shoulder, by a strap). He caught (=put his finger on) the trigger and aimed at it (lion). He caught (=shot) the lion. It roared and went down on (=attacked) him. It happened to be in (=not far from) the crowd (of hunters). When he and it (lion) had seized each other, everyone_x now came together and they_x helped him (=the man who fought with the lion); they_x slaughtered it (=lion)

and carried the lion (to the village). They_x, the men_x who_x (they_x) got involved, they_x now carried everyone who had been wounded. Carrying (them) in that way, they brought (them) home.

When (they) go on the collective hunt,² there is no kind of men's equipment (weapons etc.) that they don't put in (their bags)'. They take rifles, they take spears, they take sticks, owners of (=men with) slingshots go. Hey, owners of (bows and) arrows go. It's what they call "Mossi points" (=arrows), they take it. They take all sorts of lethal weapons.

In the group of men, in the group (=collection) of bush gear (weapons etc.), thinking that (if) a lion came out or a hyena came out, Rather than them leaving it (=lion) and coming (home), it is easier (=preferable) that there be many deaths (of people while killing the lion). '(You can bet) they won't leave (it), if it has appeared.

¹ or: 'realizing that it had laid down'. Grammar §15.2.2.2, ex. (928.b).

² In the remainder of this text, I use present tense in the translation, but the Dogon imperfective can also be translated as past imperfective ('used to'). At the time of recording, collective hunts were a thing of the past in the region because of desertification.

Jamsay 2004_03_03 translation

Women incite men to hunt

S: (In) a collective hunt, there are (some) men who do not go on the collective hunt (and) who stay at home. If they haven't gone (on the hunt), the go-come¹ women enter (=get involved,) the way they catch people (who didn't go on the hunt). That (practice) now, how is it?

A: The hunters [topic], intending to go on a collective hunt, if it happens that they have put (=played) the (chief's) horn, what they call the go-come women, that's it, it's the women who you-PI and they (=women) are not of the same belt-cord (=extended family).²

As for the go-come women strictly speaking, there are some in Domno (village), some in Gourou (area),³ there is the Tengou (Dogon group), there is the mountain people, there is we the Ongoiba people (clan). We the Ongoiba people, when they have announced a collective hunt, among the male Ongoiba (clan) children, if there happen to be any left who are not on their way to the collective hunt.

Those women of Gourou, it's the ones (=women) who have come from Gourou [focus] who are go-come women. The women of Domno (village) are go-come women. The mountain women are go-come women.

(If) your-PI fathers' children have gone on a collective hunt, (but) as for you-PI, fear [focus] is what held you-PI back, it's they (=go-come women) [focus] who are the practitioners of cousinage⁴ among villages. They will arise and go into a village.

If it happens that they have put (themselves) into a group, in a gathering of the women all together, and the group of women has gone on (=begun to scold) a man, and it has caused shame and he has (=feels) shame, they (=go-come women) will go and come down hard on (=oppress) him.

(A woman will ask:) You-Sg now, (concerning) the thing that prevented you from going on the collective hunt. If it has happened that you are sick, you'll (just) tell her that you're sick. You will tell them. "May God make you well!" they will say, (and) they will leave you alone and go on (their way).

On the other hand, if it happens that you are in good health, (concerning) the thing for which (=the reason why) you-Sg did not go, they will chase after (=harass) you. Even if you don't go on the collective hunt, you won't (be able to) spend the day in the village. You will get up and go out into the bush.⁵ The women will say, you-Sg and they (=women) are the same.¹

¹ Literal translation of a tonally unusual compound (Grammar §5.1.8), denoting women originally from another village who have married into the village. By tradition these women incite the recalcitrant young men to join the collective hunt.

² Lit. "who [you-PI and they] are not..." Grammar §7.1.3, ex (421.a).

³ Lit. "there is Domno, there is Gourou, ..."

⁴ Special relationship among cross-cousins, or interethnic "cousins."

⁵ I.e. you will have to go out of the village to avoid harassment.

As for a man's being the same as (=acting like) a woman furthermore, it isn't right (=acceptable), it's like that, at that time. It's for that reason [focus] that women drive men to the collective hunt. Because if it has gone and come (back), the meat of the collective hunt is a thing in common (=shared by all). If it happens that cowardice [focus] has not held you-Sg back. Eating meat sauce in (=out of) the sauce pot is pleasing to everyone. If it's in the (same) sauce pot, you-Sg will eat.

The way the (other) men go to the bush and bring (wild game), you-Sg don't bring (it). That [focus] is what the women heard, and they did not agree with (=accept) it. It's because cowardice [focus] is what they (=women) don't like in a man.

As for them (=go-come women) now, (when) they go into a village, (speaking) like that is what they do. That also.

Jamsay 2004_03_04 translation

Fights with an elephant, a lion, and a leopard

S: Are there people of whom you-Sg are aware who have fought with (=against) elephants?

A: Indeed. My maternal uncle, X of Tota (neighborhood), they call him Three-Voice X, some people call him (that). Some (others) call him XY. He is a resident of Petaka (village).

While he was farming his field, an elephant came out and found them (=the villagers) in the canal-row place. They spent the night (trying to) chase it from the field. The elephant refused (=did not accept) to go away.

In the morning, when day (=first light) had broken, he (X) attacked it (=elephant). He shot (it) too and killed (it). He shot and killed (it). He slung his rifle over his shoulder, went to Douentza, and spoke (=made a declaration) at the gendarmerie (=police station). They took him and brought him (there), they inspected that elephant.

In his field, it (=elephant) had come and encountered him. Since it (=elephant) [focus] had been aggressive to him, he got his head (=saved his skin) in that way (=by shooting the elephant) and got through (=survived). That happened.

Even if it isn't that (=aside from that), it happened to a lion. A person from Douma (village) hit and killed a lion with a stick. In that swamp of Dirimbé (village), after it (=lion) had ravaged the animals, when a rescue party had gone into that (area), as they were walking among the tall *Vetiveria* grass, they walked among the tall *Vetiveria* grass,² while they were looking for it, Lo! It (=lion) got up (=appeared)! It happened (luckily) that he (=a hunter) was holding a freshly cut stick (=shaft) of *Grewia* tree.³

¹ I.e., you (a man) are a woman, like us.

² *Vetiveria nigriflora*, a tall grass (about 2m high), in humid areas.

³ *Grewia bicolor*, one of five local *Grewia* spp.

He suddenly brought down that stick on the top of its (=lion's) head. When he hit (it), the *Grewia* stick that he cut down and held was a fresh stick. As he held it, gripping it in his hand, (as for) him, (there) where he had grabbed and held it, its bark came off, (some of) its wood was stripped off, and went forward and fell. The lion now, they cut its (=lion's) throat. It didn't get up again, so it happened (=luckily). That too I heard (about).

Furthermore, a third one. A leopard, in Boumbam (village), (a man named) X, elder brother of Y, used to be (there). When he went on a hunt, a leopard, he encountered it (=leopard) over there among some *Pterocarpus* trees.¹ He shot and wounded it (=leopard). It was wounded, it grappled with him. While it grappled with him, he got it in a bearhug.

He called out to a person who had gone with him,² he said: "hey you, come!" He came. When he had come, having gotten it (=leopard) in a bearhug, having squeezed it hard, to the point that it (=bearhug) was tight on his back, it was digging into his back. "Well, you, kill it for me!" he said.

The person who had gone with him³ was afraid to approach. When he was afraid, he (=first man) was holding and squeezing (the leopard), hold and squeezing, as it (=struggle) continued like that, they⁴ were getting tired. When he left (=freed) one of his hands, he unsheathed the knife that was at his waist, and he began to jab into its (=leopard's) side.

When he had left (=freed) one hand and had unsheathed (the) knife, that one hand of his coincided with (=was at) its (=leopard's) mouth. It (=leopard) now bit him and he now stabbed (it), it now bit him and he now stabbed (it). He stabbed and overpowered it. When it bit him, its biting overcame him.

'They carried him and it (=dead man and dead leopard) together to Boumbam (village). That (event) too happened.

Jamsay 2004_03_05 translation

Snakes

S: Some words about snakes that you-Sg know in our brousse (=bush, wilderness).

A: There are snakes in our brousse (=bush). There are some bad bad (=dangerous, venomous) snakes.

There are also some snakes that we do not fear to that extent. The nastiest (=most dangerous) snake, the one that terrorizes (=afflicts) us the most in this place of ours, there is nothing (=no other snake) that equals the viper (in lethality).

¹ *Pterocarpus lucens*, a low-branching tree that can form thickets.

² Lit. "...to [a person_x (who) he_x and he went]."

³ Lit. "the person_x (who) [they two]_{xy} went."

⁴ Or perhaps 'he'. The pronominal marking is (human) 3Sg, but in context it may include the (nonhuman) lion. Grammar §4.3.3, ex. (199).

There is one snake that they call viper snake.¹ That snake doesn't have (much) length. It's short. It does not exceed (=get longer than) two hand spans or around one elbow span.²

It is lazy (=sluggish). It is very lazy. (When) you step in the place where it has laid down, most often, it doesn't respond (=react). (But) if it happens that you have stepped (on it), it will sting (=bite). Its biting (=venom) also now, it has (=induces) extreme pain. That's the viper snake.

Even if it (=viper) reacts (to being stepped on), it runs away and it isn't fast. It's extremely lazy (=sluggish). When it's the cold season, it (=viper) can't bite. Even if it opens its mouth, if it's the cold season, they (=other snakes) sting (=bite) (but) it (=viper) can't do it (=sting). Now suppose that³ hot weather has come and happened. (Then) there is nothing that we fear as much as we fear it.

There is a snake (that is) nastier than it (=viper). The snake that is nastier than it, they call (it) spitting cobra.⁴ The spitting cobra is a fighting (=aggressive) snake. If the snake happens to engage in a fight (=hostile encounter), if you-Sg and it (=cobra)⁵ have seen each other (=made eye contact), if it is ready to fight with you, it stands (=raises its neck and head). Even though it's speedy, it doesn't run (=flee). That combativeness,⁶ that (spirit) is (regularly) found with it (=cobra). It's heart is bad (=malicious).

It raises its head, it gets up high about as much as an elbow span. It widens and flattens its neck. If it happens that it has widened and flattened the neck, the head becomes small. It begins spitting saliva in a long jet.

It does going and coming (=back-and-forth movements) now. It has entered into (=begun) its preparation(s). It (=cobra) now, it does this (=raises its head) and it fights (in) its (way of) fighting.

There is a snake that we fear due to hearsay also (=what we hear about it). That is puff adder.⁷ A puff adder, itself, it now, it is longer than *Echis* viper, (but) it doesn't reach (the length of) a cobra. The snake (=puff adder) is stout, it is long—er, it's not particularly long. Its biting (=venom) is extremely bad (=poisonous). There is, as far as we believe, no (other) snake whose biting (=venom) is more untreatable by medication.⁸

¹ *Echis ocellatus* (mainly in plains) and *Echis leucogaster* (mainly in hills). Together they are by far the most common vipers in the zone.

² For Jamsay, the hand span is the distance between the tip of the thumb and that of the little finger when the fingers are stretched out. The elbow span goes from the elbow to the fingertips.

³ Lit. "they have said (that ...)".

⁴ In Jamsay, literally 'snake-mouse'. *Naja nigricollis*, a spitting cobra. It spits into the eyes of its prey to disable it.

⁵ Lit. "you-Sg and it, if you-Pl ...".

⁶ Lit. "the heart (=spirit) that they [impersonal] fight". See the 'oil for rubbing' (instrumental relative) construction, Grammar §5.1.15, ex. (303.a).

⁷ No specimens seen, but most likely the puff adder (another viper), *Bitis arietans*. To avoid confusion, note that *Echis* spp. also can hiss when disturbed.

⁸ Lit. "[than it] a snake, if/when it has bitten, there is no medication, (as) we believe, there is none."

Snakes of those (kinds) exist, all that (=everything) now, if it's in (=with regard to) this territory of ours. Holes in rocks and *Pterocarpus lucens* tree (thickets), they are more numerous in those (environments). But even in Senge-Bere (a place) behind (=at the edge of) our village (=Dianwely Kessel), they are to be found.

If it (=snake) comes into the village at night, we hit and kill (it). When they have carried and brought (the) wood (to the village), viper(s), they (often) emerge from within it (=bundle of firewood). All that, it's like that for us. But puff adders are not common, they are not common (=are rare).

I haven't seen it (=puff adder) fly (=flying itself through the air), the way people say. They say that it flies past even high up (in the air),¹ (but) I haven't seen it fly. It's my hearsay (=what I've heard). That's how it was.²

Jamsay 2004_03_06 translation

millet growth stages

S: Farming in the customs of us Dogon people, at which point (=when) do they begin the wet-season farming?³

A: Farming of the wet season, in this Dogon country of ours, the wet-season work⁴ begins back in the hot dry season. Because wet-season work begins back (in the dry season) with manure gathering. When they have gathered (the) manure, taken it to the bush (=fields), and spread it out (on the soil), they begin dry sowing.⁵

If it happens that they have sown the dry sowing, when they have more or less sown widely in certain places, rain comes and falls. If it happens that rain has fallen, you-Sg had previously sown your dry sowing, you had previously sown plenty.

If it happens that the rain now has fallen, as for it (=seeds), your wet sowing, sometimes,⁶ it may be that it won't go very far for you. With one rain you-Sg can finish sowing (=planting) your field. The wet season begins at that point.

S: If now the wet season has begun, if the wet season has come now, there is (ordinary) sowing, plant-and-step (after a rain), and manure-pit sowing. Those (methods), what do they do for them?

¹ It is widely believed that the puff adder can fling itself in the air to attack a prey. However, few people in the zone have ever seen a puff adder.

² Lit. "It's the thing that is like that."

³ 'Wet-season farming' refers to raising of millet, sorghum, and other crops in fields watered by the annual monsoon June to September. Off-season (contre-saison) farming, i.e. in the dry season, is very limited.

⁴ Denotes all work relevant to wet-season farming, including work done in the dry season to clear the fields before the first rains.

⁵ I.e. seeds are planted so they will germinate when the first rain comes.

⁶ Lit. "if it's a certain (one)."

A: They do manure-pit sowing back in the hot season. Manure-pit sowing, any time you are able (to do it), when it has become the autumn (after the harvest), it can happen that you have (already) begun your manure-pit sowing. You keep digging, until it happens that what you have dug has become substantial, (then) you spread manure thinly

The manure that you have gathered and taken (there), in each manure pit you will take (in your hands) and put a hands-ful¹ or two hands-ful. Now, when that time has arrived, you-Sg will mix the millet (with manure) and put it (in the pits).

If it happens that you have finished mixing and mixing the millet and putting it (in the pits), it (=what is sown) has become like (“has stood in the position of”) dry sowing, if the rain falls. Because they won’t sow that (=manure-pit sowing) unless it sprouts. Regular sowing, and manure-pit sowing, that’s how they do them.

(There) where they sow (=do) the dry sowing now too, it’s in a regularly used field. They sow and put (it) down and leave (it).² Where you-Sg have farmed in the past, on your-Sg mounds³ [focus] you will sow, put down, and leave the dry seeds.

(There) where they sow (=do) the wet sowing,⁴ as for it, that is is not necessarily a place—, a regularly farmed place. You-Sg sow in the regularly farmed field. (If) it isn’t a regularly farmed field now, you sow (=do) wet sowing in a new field.

A new field that you-Sg have sown (in part) but have not reached (the boundary of), if grass (=weeds) has sprouted (there), you will hoe and step on (the sown seeds), that too is (a method of) sowing. All those are components (=alternative methods) of sowing. The kinds of sowing are many. It’s like that.

S: If that has passed (=aside from that), farming nowadays, it’s the first round of weeding and the second round of weeding.⁵ It now, how is it done?

A: What they call the first round of weeding, formerly what they put (=used) (in) the fields was a daba (=native hoe).⁶ You weed (=remove weeds from) the wet sowing, (and) you weed the dry sowing. When the millet has sprouted, if you weed in (=around) the sprouts, when it happens that you have finished weeding, grass (=weeds) will sprout again in (=around) that, in (the places) that you have weeded.

If it happens to be at certain times, the time when you-Sg go out to weed, it may happen that the grass (=weeds) has not finished sprouting (=has not all sprouted). When you weed too now,

¹ Amount of earth, dry manure, etc. held in one’s two hands cupped together.

² I.e. until the first rains come.

³ Mounds or ridges in the field, separated by furrows from hoeing or plowing.

⁴ I.e. sowing seeds after a rain early in the wet season.

⁵ In this passage wárú ‘farming’ means more specifically ‘the first round of weeding’ after the crop plants have grown somewhat, as opposed to wǒm ‘the second round of weeding’, when the plants are fairly high. The first round is the more difficult, and includes thinning out crop plants, reshaping mounds, etc.

⁶ Nowadays some of this weeding is done by means of a plow.

the millet is small (=half-grown). Where it is, some grass (=weeds) remains at its base. When you weed too now, (under) the millet, some grass will not have died (in the first weeding), and will still remain.

If it happens that the wet season is good (=rains are plentiful), if the grass (=weeds) that remains has branched and spread out (like trailing vines), the grass that sprouted behind (=belatedly), if it has sprouted and gone into it (=millet), if weeds will grow, to the point that it looks as though they hadn't done any farm work (in the first round of weeding).

If it happens to be like that, you-Sg will take a daba (=hoe) and again go into it (=field) a second time. When you have taken a daba and gone into it a second time, that is what they call the second round of weeding.

That now, you'll (again) weed wherever your daba (=hoe) had reached before (in the first round of weeding). In our territory, you-Sg will weed (=do the second weeding) until you reach (its end); otherwise, you won't get any millet..

Even when you have finished doing the second weeding now, in some spots a third (sprouting of) grass (=weeds) will come out (=appear) again, in the other spots a third (sprouting of) grass will not come out.

It's like that now, it will happen that your-Sg farming (work) is finished. We are thus (=in that situation).

S: When that is finished, the millet now, the first round of weeding is finished (and) the second round of weeding is finished, now it's the (grown) millet [focus] that has remained. The millet bearing its grain spike, its bearing grains, its exuding milk (=latex in unripe grains), and its carrying fuzz (=flowers on the grain spike), tell us a little about (all) that.

A: After you-Sg have weeded (the) millet, your weeding has been done well, your planted sprouts now are good (=in good shape). If the wet season has turned out well, you can't get away at all from your field.¹ If the place (=field) has turned out well, it's fine.

You work (=do) the work, (and) your work has turned out well. Hey, it's nice to look at. At the time of that (=at that time), the land is cool, it (=weather) is nice, what you've worked (on) has turned out well. The time that is in between them, it isn't a particularly long time. If the rains are falling (=in the wet season), it can become a thing that is pleasing to look at.

It (=reports of this) will get around. "Have you-Sg gone to that field?" "Have you gone (yet) to that (=other) field?" As soon as people have come and gathered together, "So-and-so's field" (and) "So-and-so's (=another person's) field." That will come and remain stable² just like that.

At this time (=later part of farming season) there is no big (=major) work. But going to the field(s) is frequent. Because there is no field that they don't go to in order to look at (it). (If) it has

¹ Because there is much weeding and other work to do when rain is abundant.

² Verb-chain with 'come', 'remain', and 'be quiet (calm, stable)'.

turned out well, you-Sg will go to your field. (If) it has not turned out well, you-Sg will go to your field.¹

At this time, the situation of the wet season is extremely good to look at, if it happens that the wet season is good. On the other hand, if it hasn't turned out well, it is pitiful, since (so much) sweat [focus] drips (=is expended).² It's like that.

S: (The) millet, now when its grain spike has arrived (=developed), it's spike has borne (grains), its fuzz and its milky latex (have appeared), when the millet has ripened, tell us some words of (=about) that, (the) thing with which it first begins.

A: (The) thing with which it begins. We say it begins with (the millet plants') ceasing to grow leaves.³ (The) millet comes, they say it has grown a stem. When it has grown a stem, when the stem segments (on the growing millet plant) are counted, (it is seen that) your-Sg millet now has developed segments.⁴

When we say, "So-and-so's (=someone else's) millet also has put (=grown) segments," when it has emerged from the segment(s), "now I have seen the millet-mouth catching (=that the stems have stopped growing)," we'll say.

The millet that has borne grains first, as for us, we call that "look-and-show-me."⁵ But when (the) millet is about to bear grain spikes, when it has arisen (=grown), they say first "it has ceased growing leaves."⁶ When they say, "I have seen the millet ceasing to grow leaves," that too is "look-and-show-me," to begin with. It is nothing other than "look-and-show-me".

"I have seen (it)" he says. "Bring people and show (them)! You now, if you have seen (it), show it to (the) people!" That [focus] is "look-and-show-me." When they say "look-and-show-me, look-and-show-me," if it happens that those (plants) that have ceased growing leaves are numerous, now by contrast it has gone away from (=gone past the stage of) "look-and-show-me". It may be that there is no-one who did not see (it).

Going away from (going past the stage of) "look-and-show-me" too, they say "I have seen bearing millet bearing (i.e. with grain spikes). In So-and-so's field I have seen bearing millet. In So-and-so's (=someone else's) field I have seen bearing mille." If it happens that bearing millet is numerous, it has gone past "look-and-show-me."

That too, now, they say "I have seen milk-exuding millet plants. Saying thus, until eventually millet comes, fuzz (=flowers) and "look-and-show-me," all that comes in that way, (the) millet comes and finishes ripening, it bears (grain spikes).

¹ I.e. 'whether it has turned out well or not, you will...?'

² I.e. you have worked hard for nothing.

³ The stage when the stem and leaves have reached full size, but before the grain spike develops. Literally "[mouth-end] taking."

⁴ Grammar §15.2.1.1, ex. (912.a).

⁵ Grammar §5.1.16.

⁶ Lit. "(millet) has caught its last mouth." Grammar §10.1.2.6, ex. (562.c).

If it (=wet season) has turned out well, whether it has turned out well or it hasn't turned out well, whether the wet season is good (=has turned out well) or isn't good, all the millet that hasn't borne (grain spikes) by now will end up being no good. In a year, as for it (=millet that hasn't grown a grain spike), seeing it is not common.

S: If it happens that the millet has already finished bearing (grain spikes) now, (and) when (the) millet has ripened, how (=what) do they do, today, in the field(s)?

A: When they say that the millet has ripened and is standing (full-grown), they will carry out the harvest [focus] in the field.

S: Tell us a little about the harvest.

A: They remove (=harvest) the early millet first,¹ in our (=Jamsay) land. If it's (in) certain (other) lands, (regular) millet, they cut (down) and lay (in the field) its main plant,² and have harvested (=done) the harvest (cutting off the grain spikes), they remove their early millet afterwards.

As for (here) in our (=northern Dogon) country specifically, in our (administrative) district, we remove (the) early millet first. (The) millet comes and whitens (=ripens). If it happens that the milk (=latex in grains) has developed, what they call "early-millet millet", it will ripen. It won't wait (=lag behind), it will pour (=shed its grains). Formerly, before it (=early millet) shedded ("poured"), in the old days women [focus] used to go and remove (=harvest) it.

Nowadays, (the) men help them (=women). Formerly, it was women [focus] who used to go and remove (early millet). Today (=nowadays), when men have sent young people (for) the removing of early millet, they make them (=young people) help their mothers.

The men help their women and remove (=harvest) the early millet, so that it will be more clear (=orderly), and so that more (early millet) will be gotten, to increase the gain (=yield or profit).

When they have removed and assembled (it), they carefully take out (early millet, leaving the other millet in the field). When the early millet is finished (=has been picked), in (=among) the (regular) millet, there is a short thin (type of grain spike) that they call "dengebere" millet. They will begin to carefully take that out (leaving the best quality millet in the field).

If it happens that they have already taken that out, now it may be that it's regular millet [focus] that remains in the field. The regular millet that remains in the field, when they have entered (=gotten involved) in the harvest for it, they will go to a place and uproot (the stems), like a courtyard (i.e. an open flat spot). They will hoe it until it becomes cleared.

If it remains without dirtiness (i.e. unwanted vegetation), in a place that is not a place where water sits, they begin the harvest in that manner in the field, in the middle of the field. Having cut (off) millet that is near its place, when they have gathered (the grain spikes) in that place, they

¹ The verb ǵǵ: 'remove, take out, take off' here denotes harvesting by hand (breaking off grain spikes of early millet), as opposed to the usual 'harvest (millet)' term jèrè, which denotes the process of cutting off the grain spikes with a knife.

² Some stems are left in the field as fertilizer. sá: can mean either 'uproot (large plant, with a hoe)' or 'cut down (tall plant) by slashing it near the base with a hoe or sickle'.

keep dumping out all the rest of it and keep laying it (on the ground) set down in the vicinity of that place.

When they have finished cutting off (grain spikes) in the field, they gather all that (aforementioned) millet lying in the field, where they had uprooted it (=stems), and bring and assemble (it, in a pile). They call that (big) pile of millet “heap”. The remainder (=small initial piles, scattered here and there) is “millet pile”. That (big) one is “heap.”

If it happens that they have finished bringing and assembling (it) in the (big) heap, now, if you-Sg will fence it in (with a ring of thorn branches), you will fence it in.¹ Likewise if you-Sg will carry (it), you will speak to (the) women.

In the way that we found (=inherited from elders), formerly, when they (=men) had gone around and said to the women of a neighborhood, “it’s (time for) carrying So-and-so’s millet,” (the) women would get up early. When they had picked up tightly woven grass-stem baskets, they would go to the field(s). Each one would put her load (in the basket), as (much) as she could (carry) and they would carry (them) home.

When the (big) heap (of grain spikes) was finished (=had been carried home), today (=nowadays) after (donkey) carts have become common, in our land people who carry (millet) on carts are numerous.

Women, they (=some of them) certainly carry (millet, on their heads), (but) there are many people who carry (millet) with carts. Whenever it (=location of millet pile) is closer (to the village), women [focus] will carry (it, in baskets on their heads); whenever it is a distant place, they (normally) transport it with carts; that, it’s thus that we do with it.

S: When they harvest (=do) the harvest now, the gear for harvesting it, there is which and which?²

A: Gear for harvesting, it’s a (regular) knife, and it’s a small harvesting knife, and it’s an animal-hide bag. What they put millet in and sling (over the shoulder), (and) what they cut millet (with), with that [focus] it’s work gear. So it’s them (=tools), it’s work gear. A (regular) knife (and) a small harvesting knife. That is what cuts. What they cut (millet grain spikes) and put it (in), it’s an animal-hide bag.

What they gather, deliver (=convey somewhere), and pour out (millet grain spikes) (with), it’s a tightly woven grass-stem basket or a coarsely woven branch-strip basket. What they bring (it) home (with), that too is a tightly woven basket (or) a coarsely woven basket.

S: If it happens that he has come home, what do they do now (with that) millet now? If it happens that (he) has come home?

A: When they have said “millet has come and has arrived at home,” when they have said “it’s So-and-so’s millet-carrying!”, you-Pl the people of one (=the same) door (=same extended family), men of the group (=extended family) of one door, when those men have gotten together, they will put (=store) the millet (in) a granary.

¹ I.e., you may fence it in if you wish.

² = ‘what things?’.

As for a granary, if they say “house”, it (house) is what is a place of people; if they say “granary,” it’s a place of (=for) millet, a house of (=for) millet. If they have arranged (=laid) stones and have built it (=granary), there is a gap between it (=granary) and the ground. They store it (=millet) well (=safely) in a way that termites cannot go up (into the granary), and (as for) the wood (=floor logs), they (=people) place wood on top of those stones, and they press down (=lay earth over) the wood, with earth. They build the granary further with earth, and when it (=granary wall) has been built and taken up all the way (to the top), they build a conical roof¹ and put it on top of it (=granary), so that it won’t leak now even if rain falls. The way it is more (=very well) protected, they will put it (=conical roof) on that granary.

Jamsay 2004_03_07 translation

Introduction of the plow

S: When (the) plow came. As for us (=Dogon), in the old days, farming by hand [focus] was what we knew. (Then) they brought (=introduced) the plow [focus]. Putting it (=plow) on animals² they farmed.³ (As for) that now, when that (=plow) came, how did the Dogon receive (=react to) it?

A: The Dogon received the plow very drily (=skeptically). Instead of⁴ seeing how it (=plow) worked and accepting it, they didn’t like it.⁵ Because, I can say that they didn’t like it.

An old man of ours (=one of our elders), after he brought a plow (to the village), he had animals for farming it (=field), (and) he had a plow. For about what added up to ten years,⁶ it (=plow) lay (=remained) in his hands (=possession), (but) he didn’t farm (with it).

They didn’t know how one goes and farms with it.⁷ You-Sg know that if it’s [=if we’re talking about] (making) ridges (in the field) by hand (i.e. with a hoe), it is segment by segment (small mounds in rows); (by contrast) a plow-made ridge has no segments (=it makes a continuous furrow).⁸ It happened that they did not want to see it. They didn’t accept it quickly.

One by one, people have been learning (=becoming familiar with) it. One by one, people were learning it. Now, (if there is) anyone who doesn’t have it (=plow), perhaps one who does not have

¹ The conical granary roof is distinctively Jamsay. Other northern Dogon have granaries with flat roofs.

² Donkeys, oxen, and camels are now used to draw plows.

³ Lit. ‘cause (animal) to draw (hoe, plow)’.

⁴ Lit. “if it isn’t ...”

⁵ I.e., they accepted it only belatedly and reluctantly.

⁶ Literally ‘a thing that reaches ten years’ followed by Reciprocal in the sense ‘approximately’ (Grammar §8.5.3.1).

⁷ Lit. “they didn’t know [the way (=how) to do and farm (with) it and go].” Grammar §15.2.6.1, ex. (954.b).

⁸ wḏ-túmó denotes elevations in a field, either individual mounds (shaped with a hoe, i.e. “by hand”) forming rows with “segments,” or long ridges separated by furrows (made by a plow).

an evening meal (=does not have much to eat), he has reached the (extreme) point (=situation). The production (=crop yield, of the two methods) is not the same, the restfulness (=easiness of labor) is not the same, the size of field (that can be worked) is not the same.

Today (=nowadays) it's doing thus (=farming with plows), but even today, an elder, in his heart, if they (=elders) have not abandoned farming (due to age), (the idea) that it (=plow) do the farming in his field does not please him a lot, there are (still) a few old men here and there (like that).¹

Jamsay 2004_03_08 translation

Crop pests

S: If they have done farm work now in the wet season, there are things that are harmful to (=damage) millet. Birds for example, grasshoppers² for example, there is (all) that and also millet diseases. The way you-Sg will speak to us a little about that; if it (=pest) comes, what they will do (about) it.

A: Formerly—. If it's (=if we're talking about) formerly (=the old days), there was everything. There is what the Dogon people call "weevil larva(e)".³ As for that, back when the (millet) seeds have sprouted, in (=during) the seed-sprouting, in the ground, in (the) base (=roots), when they (=larvae) have attached itself to its base (=roots), they (=larvae) eat.

That is weevil larvae. A millet seedling (=sprout), in its early stage of development, when they say that the seedling is good (=has sprouted well), if a dry spell (without rain)⁴ comes in, what they call "spiders" are in it (=millet). The spiders now, they eat, on top [focus]⁵ they eat, as for them (=spiders), until it brings it (=millet) down below.

Weevil larvae remain at the base, in the earth, and they eat. Leaves [focus] up above are what spiders eat. All those are diseases (=pests) of millet. When millet comes, (suppose that) the spiders haven't taken it, and weevil larvae haven't taken it. Even if it happened that the wet season was good for it, when it (=millet) begins to develop segments, you-Sg will find white spittle in its (=stem's) interior.

Its point (=needle) that has stood up (=developed at the top of the stem), in (the place) where it goes and grows. (If) you-Sg go the morning, you find that the white spittle has become

¹ In this passage the speaker alternates between generic 3PI ('they'), in a distributive context denoting all the old men ('one by one' = 'a few'), and a generic 3Sg ('he') denoting a representative member of the set.

² Nonhuman terms including animates generally have no singular/plural distinction, so either plural or (generic) singular translations are possible throughout this text.

³ At least one of the larvae called by this name is a whitish weevil (curculionid beetle) larva.

⁴ Lit. "dry rain."

⁵ I.e., the above-ground part of the plant.

abundant in the millet. If you see (that), the grub of the white spittle is inside. That is /kara/ grub(s).¹ That too is a disease (=pest).

Aside from that,² (when) millet comes and has borne (a grain spike), (and) when they say that milk (=latex) has begun to exude, there is a beetle, they call it “millet beetle.”³ The millet grain spike that is exuding milk, that [focus] is what they (=beetles) drink. (If) they can finish drinking, it’s the ruin of (the) millet.

Even if it has happened that weevil larvae haven’t drunk the millet, there is millet head-borer.⁴ The millet head-borers, they’re in the millet grain and what they call the bare millet spike, they’re (in) between those two. They (=head-borers) bore through the millet. It (=millet) doesn’t get and put (=develop) grain(s). The grain(s) that it has put (=has grown), they are not good (=healthy) grains.

(When) they finish boring through, it may happen that it has disconnected the stick (=stem). At the base (of the grains), those (head-borers), in the grains, it’s inside [focus] that they eat. That one they call “millet head-borer.”

There are grasshoppers. It’s that time (of year). There is no time (of year) when grasshoppers cannot inflict damage on the millet. (The) millet (grain) has come and ripened and dried (=hardened). If it hasn’t reached (the point that) here it (=grain) stands, from the time the sprouts sprout, through the time it has formed stem segments, and finally on to the time when it has borne grains. Before they (can) say that the grains (of millet) have ripened, grasshoppers, any time they (=grasshoppers) enter into it (=millet), they can inflict damage.

If it happened that (in) your-Pl village [focus] they (=grasshopper larvae) had hatched, or in your-Pl country [focus] they had hatched, what they (=people) used to do about it (was:), formerly, in (our) custom, they dug a channel (=ditch), they broke (off) some *Combretum tree*⁵ foliage and some foliage of (other) trees, they chased and put (the grasshoppers) in(to) the ditch. They (=people) dig up (the earth) and fill it up⁶ (after driving grasshoppers into the pit), in order to reduce them (=grasshoppers, in number).

They certainly do not completely disappear.⁷ But that can reduce them (in number). If it happened that it was the whole village (population), long ago, they used to do that. Today (=nowadays), all that (=killing insects), it goes and remains in (=consists of) poison

¹ Unidentified.

² Lit. “if it (=that) has passed, -”

³ *Pachnoda* spp., cetoniid beetles.

⁴ Various butterfly (Lepidoptera) larvae (at least three types seen).

⁵ *Combretum glutinosum*, a common tree in the plains.

⁶ A pit is dug by shoveling out earth with dabas (native hoes), then after driving the grasshoppers into the pit the earth is shoveled back over them, burying them.

⁷ Lit. “are not finished.”

(=insecticide). Everything (now), poison is in everything.¹ All that now, it's powder (=dry insecticide).

Only by money² also now, they work (=do) it. In the morning, it's that (=then), early in the morning, (back) at the time (=early wet season) in which you-Sg do the sowing, you buy some poison (=insecticide) for spreading (i.e. in powder form), you mix it (=insecticide) into the millet (seeds), (and) you sow it (=insecticide) together with it (=millet).

It (=insecticide) has a value (=is useful) in the seedlings, for "spiders." Weevil larvae that are in the base (=roots), it (=insecticide) has a value for larvae (grubs).

Aside from that, if it has happened that grasshoppers [focus] have hatched, they (=villagers) will speak to those with power (=the authorities). You-Pl farmers, if it happens that they (=villagers) have gone and spoken to them, to the supervisors (=authorities), they'll bring some poison (=insecticide).

There is what (=the insecticide that) they will pump (=spray) (for) the village collectively, (and) there is (separately) what you-Sg will buy on your own initiative³ and pump (=spray) in your field.

Now, you-Sg now, it's thus [focus] that they (often) do for them (=grasshoppers). But we haven't yet seen any medicine (=remedy) of (=for) millet beetles specifically, (for) them and (for) millet head-borers.

S: Suppose now that it's (=we're talking about) birds,⁴ what do they (=people) do (about them)?

A: If it's birds on the other hand, they (=people) get together and shout. If it happens to be bird(s) (that are the crop pests), if it happens that they (=birds) have been in your-Pl village at night, when the sun has set, (and) when (the) boys of the village have gathered together, having collected tomtoms, horns, rifles, (any) noisy thing(s), they go into (the) field(s). If they think (=have learned) that they (=birds) are on this (=one particular) side (of the village), they (=line of villagers) will drive them straight ahead.

At sunset, at the time when they (=birds) are stopping to rest for the night, after they (=people) have driven them (=birds) forward, if it happens that they (=birds) have arisen (=flown away), they (=birds) will go far away to spend the night. If they (=birds) have gone far away, and have spent the night, possibly you-Pl will have your-Pl peace with (=relief from) them. We have (once) seen them (=people) chase (birds) away like this.

In addition, white people, if it's they [focus] who have helped you-Pl, (or if) it's your-Pl government⁵ [focus] that has helped you-Pl, there will be poison (for killing birds), they pump

¹ Lit. "...a thing that poison is not in, it doesn't exist." Grammar §11.2.3, ex. (687).

² I.e. insecticide must be bought.

³ Lit. "you [with your head]." Grammar §18.1.3.1, ex. (1113.a).

⁴ In addition to bird spp. that are resident, at least during the wet season, there are huge flocks of migratory grain-eating birds that can devastate the fields of an area in a single day (red-faced dioch *Quelea quelea*, golden sparrow *Passer luteus*).

⁵ Lit. "owners of power."

(=spray) and they (=birds) die,¹ they do (it), that too we have heard, but we haven't seen much (of it). Our (actually) seeing it isn't (=hasn't been) common, but we've heard (about it).

Jamsay 2004_03_09 translation

After the harvest

S: Now, if the harvest has passed, in our Dogon country,² the thing that they will do like farming, the other work that they do, the traveling (to work) of boys (=young men), and the traveling (to work) of women, tell us how it is (or: was)!

A: There it is, that too can be said indeed. In our Dogon country, that's just our³ wet-season workers (=farmers). (As for) us specifically, we raise animals and do wet-season farming. (As for) the strong point of our situation (=our main activity),⁴ it is in this area (just mentioned).

After you-Sg have raised animals, if it happens that there is an animal that you have raised, when the wet season ends, there are animal-following people (=young herders), (and) there are animal overseers. The herders ("animal followers") and the animal custodians are distinct, even now, in a house.

The one who follows animals is a child, he can follow (animals), he can go and come (back, with animals). He can go into the bush (=outback) and look for (stray animals) and bring (them). Having stopped (with the livestock), it may be that he (=young herder) cannot give them drink.⁵ There are (also) some people who remain at home, in order to have it (=herd) drink water (at a well in the village). They having not gone south o do seasonal work,

it's him, he's an animal custodian. An animal herder is distinct, an animal custodian is distinct. If he has tended (animals) and brought (them), did they all come (back)? Which (animal) [focus] did not come back (with the herd)? Did (a wew or she-goat) give birth to and abandon (a newborn, in the pasture)? (Or) did it not give birth and abandon (the newborn)? That one (=animal) is pregnant, may it not leave (the) field and go!

One who has (animals) drink (=herder), the one who brings (animals) back and takes (animals) out (to pasture),⁶ there is that one. Thus they (=animals), we are on the side of (=among) them (=animals). At the side of (the) animals(s), in (=concerning) the wet-season work (=farming), the wet-season work is finished. The usefulness of the wet season hasn't finished, it's (still) there.

¹ The reference may be to spraying from aircraft.

² Lit. "in our Dogon house."

³ Can perhaps also be construed as "we are just wet-season workers." I.e., 1Pl émé can be a topic ('as for us'), or a possessor.

⁴ Lit. "the strength of our thing (matter)."

⁵ I.e., he can't operate a well, which may require skill and strength.

⁶ Fulfulde loans á:ré- '(herder) take (animals) out from the pen to the pasture (in the morning)' and já:jé- '(herder) bring back (animals) from the pasture to the pen (in the late afternoon)'.

It's that. It's people who grow calabash (=gourd plants). Starting with that (=calabashes), continuing with ladles, and going on to gourds with necks.¹ When they go on and find (=grow) watermelons, all that is what they farm (=grow).

Certain people will put (such plants) in that field, to the point that it (=plants) is a lot. If it happens that it (=plant) has emerged in (the midst of) the millet, they have cut (=harvested) the millet (and) its (=millet's) stems too are finished (=have been removed), if they have fenced it off (=with thorn branches), they will care for (=tend) it.

There are people (for whom) it has a benefit (=is worthwhile). There are people who get (=make) a lot (of money) with calabash(es). If the year² happens to have turned out well, if you have raised gourd (=calabash) plants, the calabash plants (and) all of your dry-season work can stand up (independently) on the road for you (=can fulfill some of your needs).³ Because a lot can be gotten, (for) some people.

Other people now, it can happen that the fact that they do not have any place to put it (=calabash plants) does not let them put and leave (the plants). Some (other) villages,⁴ because of calabash (farming), they don't go anywhere else (in the dry season). Calabashes and drinking ladles and small necked gourds, a lot [focus] comes out (from it), money is made. There are those (people) who sit (=rely) on that.

In addition to all that,⁵ certain people in our country put a fence around a place, and sow (=plant) a lot in the road to (=hoping to get) something to put in the sauce.⁶ (Populations of) villages near water irrigate it (=field).⁷ For irrigating it (properly), if they remain (=keep at it) throughout three or four months, it will enter into usefulness (=be worthwhile) for them. (As for) them now, they don't travel (for work).

There are people who are engaged in that (=dry-season farming) now. When that has gone and passed (=after all that), you-Pl have farmed and are in the post-harvest period. When the post-harvest period has passed, whether the wet season has been good, or has been ruined (=poor), if it has happened that you-Sg do not have something else to do, if you go into a big city and you have

¹ Three products of different cultivars of the gourd plant (*Lagenaria sicerarea*). A calabash is a half-sphere (sawed-off half of a gourd fruit). A ladle is a very small half-sphere with an extension used as a handle, from a small-fruited cultivar of the plant. A necked gourd is a mid-sized gourd (for milk or other liquid), not sawed in half, with a short piece of neck that is cut off where it begins to open up from its narrowest point (this allows the neck to be held under a belt).

² I.e., the farming season, June to October.

³ I.e. you can afford to stay in the village during the dry season, as an alternative to going to a city to look for menial work.

⁴ Or: 'A village (population) sometimes, ...'. See note on Jamsay original.

⁵ Lit. "if all that is finished". Grammar §19.3.4, ex. (1166.c).

⁶ I.e. for subsistence, not as a cash crop.

⁷ There is no rain October to May, but some villages have a source of water (drying ponds, mountain springs) that permit some irrigation during the dry season.

done (=spent) your hot dry season (working there), get some clothes and (money for) your (annual) tax! There are some people who are going for that (=to earn money).

There are those who, thinking “my agemates are going (to the city)”, also (themselves) go (to the city) now. That, it’s who-PI?¹ Or that, it’s those [focus] who have been going (to the city) and haven’t been getting anything (and) haven’t been coming (back). It’s he [focus], he is (thinking) “my agemates have gone, I (too) will go.” There are people of that (type) also now.

That type (of thing) isn’t (there). Those two² (types) aren’t (there).

Jamsay 2004_03_10 translation

Relations with Fulbe

S: Now, Fulbe people and Dogon people. Fulbe people, they are (engaged in) sitting (=living) together with us (Dogon). Tell us about the way they (=Fulbe) and Dogon exist together.

A: The (co-)existence of us Dogon and the Fulbe. We cannot be separated from each other, (but) we can’t stick too closely to each other.³ It’s thus [focus] that we are together.

Because what is it, (what is) a Dogon farmer? After he has done farming, if it happens that they have said that his wet season has turned out well, every (single) year in which you-Sg (=farmer) get (=harvest) millet, (as for that) millet, you must sell (some of) it. Keeping and storing (millet, so) here is always some (at hand) cannot be done. (As for) the millet, you will sell it.

When you have sold it also now, (either) you will engage in commerce (=buying and selling) with it (=the proceeds from selling millet), or you will raise livestock with it. If it happens that it’s livestock [focus]⁴ that you are raising, you will raise cows, you will raise goats, you will raise sheep.

Some people have (livestock), (but) don’t have the people (in their families) who take them to pasture (=tend them) also now.⁵ Some (other) people have (livestock), (and) the people who take them to pasture, they don’t want their own children [focus] to tend them (=animals).

¹ I.e. ‘what kind of people?’

² The two types of people (those who go away to make money for specific purposes, and those who go away just to emulate their peers).

³ Lit. “we cannot overflow (=overdo) sticking now to each other.” I.e., the interethnic relationship is intimate, but difficult.

⁴ The entire VP ‘raise livestock’ (as opposed to ‘engage in commerce’) is focalized conceptually, but the morphological focus is just on ‘livestock’.

⁵ Can also be parsed as ‘... those others who tend them (=cattle) do not have any (as possessions)’, as this passage is translated in Grammar §11.5.2, ex (717.a). The issue is whether ‘people who take them to pasture’ is subject or object of *jîné* ‘have’.

(So) they take it (=cattle, livestock) and give it to the Fulbe. There are many (kinds of) Fulbe. They (=Fulbe) put (the) cattle in from of them(-selves), they drive them (forward) and take charge of them. They (=Fulbe) are the people of the cattle herd. Very often they have (custody of) cattle.

Those cattle are the cattle of (=owned by) us (Dogon) farmers. The cattle that they (=Fulbe) take charge of are the cattle of us farmers. Those (=that kind of) Fulbe are many, (the ones) who take charge of our cattle.

That all the cows (in a herd) belong to the Fulbe, it doesn't happen like that in our (=Dogon) country. It likewise isn't (the case) either that all the cattle that the Fulbe people drive ahead and have possession (=custody) of belongs to him (=Fulbe person).¹ Our cattle and their own cattle, it's them (=cattle) [focus] that they (=Fulbe) drive and take charge of together.

But a farmer, even (for) a donkey that you-Sg (=farmer) have mounted and (will) go (with) to the field, there are places in your field that you don't want it (=donkey) to reach. The Fulbe people now—, for us—, (that's) the reason for (the fact that) they can't get away from (clinging to) our napes (=depending on us).² Much less can they separate themselves from us and go far away.

Because it's we [focus] who buy their milk. That (=selling to us Dogon) [focus] is their livelihood. When they (=Fulbe) have milked (the cows), they will bring and put³ (the milk) in the village, and go around selling the milk.

Even if you-Sg (=Dogon farmer) have cattle, unless it's the case that you [focus] are the one who tends them (=cattle), their (=cows') milk, it doesn't belong to you. That [focus] is what they bring and sell to us. If our women have traded for it (=milk) with our millet, they put it in our cream of millet, they put it in our cooked meals.

They (=Fulbe) now, the millet that they have gotten by barter, they take (=convey) it (to their camps), that [focus] is what they put in their supper. The milk that remains, that [focus] is what they will eat it (=meal) with. That's how we are, between us (=Dogon) and them (=Fulbe).

S: Now, if it happens that their animals go into our field(s), (that is to say) if it happens that a Fulbe's animals go into a Dogon's field, in that case how will the situation end up?⁴

Can also be interpreted as 'Some people have (livestock), (but) don't have the people who take them to pasture also now.

¹ Apparent number mismatch between 'Fulbe people' and 'Fulbe person'. Such shifts suggest that the singular form is to be interpreted distributively (i.e. each person).

² I.e. there is a symbiotic, but wary, relationship between Dogon and Fulbe.

³ Since 'put (milk) in the village' is somewhat awkward, perhaps we should interpret this as 'put (milk) in containers in the village'.

⁴ Because Dogon (especially Jamsay) fields are unfenced, and are in the same lowlands traversed by Fulbe-tended cattle and sheep & goat herds, there are chronic problems in the pre-harvest period because of livestock entering fields at night and eating the grain. Dogon often suspect Fulbe of allowing this to happen intentionally.

A: After a Fulbe's animals have gone into your-Sg field, (as for) the animals, you-Sg have gone and found them (in your field), or you have followed their tracks, (so that) you have gone (to) a Fulbe camp, (you'll say) "Well, So-and-so, yesterday your-Sg animal(s)¹ damaged my field."

(Reply:) "My animal damaged your field?"

"Uh-huh, here is its tracks. Its tracks [focus] are what I have come following. Look here, it (=trail) started from my field (and leads) straight to where it comes to your camp. If you would like, let's go along (the trail)!"

"Very well, I accept (what you say). If it was my animals [focus] that damaged your field. Everything that you say, I agree (about it) with you." They will agree. If you have caught him, he will agree.

When he has agreed, (you'll say): "Well, come to the village, we'll go and speak to the village chief. You and I will go and speak to the chief of the village. You (two) will go to the chief of the village. When you (two) have gone (to the village), the village elders will assemble. The councilors of the village too will agree.

You-Sg (=Dogon) will go and speak to them (=councilors). They will go and look at the damage of (=to) the field, where the animals stopped (in the field),² what they damaged. You-Sg now will come and sit (in the communal men's palaver hut), (and) the Fulbe now will come and sit. The (village) councilors who have gone to the field and have gone for witnessing, it's they [focus] who will come and sit down. When they have come and sat down, they will say: "So-and-so (=Fulbe), indeed your-Sg cows have damaged his field. In view of that now, you-Sg the owner of the field (=Dogon), state your claim."³

"Such-and-such amount is my claim." They will speak to the Fulbe, the councilors (will): "Well, the owner of the field (=Dogon farmer) has said that the amount of compensation of (=for damages to) his field is such-and-such an amount." There is: "(By) God and his Messenger (=Muhammad), reduce (it) for me!" There is also "I refuse."⁴ In that domain (=legal disputes), there is nothing that doesn't happen.

There is (when) it will become a fight, (and) there is (when) it will not become a fight and (when) it will go and end up in peace. If both of them (=Dogon farmer and Fulbe) are people who have wisdom, it exists (=sometimes happens) hat with "don't do it again!" they (=persons in a dispute) pardon each other (=are reconciled).

Having made (the Fulbe) pay, having fixed ("put") the day, (that is to say) having fixed the deadline (for) the payment, there are those (Fulbe) who come and pay, there are those who flee treacherously before the payment (deadline) arrives.⁵

¹ 'Animal' in this passage may be construed as singular or plural. The reference would usually be to cows.

² I.e. how deeply the animals penetrated into the field.

³ Lit. "speak your payment (=compensation)!"

⁴ These are two possible responses by the Fulbe.

⁵ Translation partially revised from Grammar §15.2.4.2, ex. (939.d)

Flee—, to the extent that you-Sg won't see him, unless it is (=until) some other year. On the other hand, if you have not left off (=forgiven the indemnity owed you), regardless of the fact that he fled,¹ when he does (finally) come (back), he will pay.

But: “if a Fulbe has consumed my field and has fled, it's him [focus] that I went around looking for”, (that situation) isn't common among Dogon people. I have never heard (of that). That too, it is what there is like that.

Jamsay 2004_03_11 translation

Origin of Dianwely village

S: Now, we Jamsay, by doing what (=how) was it here [focus] that they came and settled?² They call us (=say that we are) mountaineers. (But) it's we Jamsay [focus] who are sitting (=settled) around here on the land.³ By doing what (=how) did the first Jamsay come here?

A: The first of the Jamsay, what they did to come here. As for our (originally) coming straight to this area, we left Ancient Dianwely and came to around here.⁴ Going from Ancient Dianwely, (it was) coming-coming-coming-coming.

They came (this way) until they went and arrived at that place of *Combretum* trees.⁵ Our people (=ancestors), (at the time) when they came down here (=to the plains), horses and fighting and everything, like that they came down.

Having come down as warriors, after they came all the way to Amba (village), the people of Amba said, as for them (=people of Amba), the land did not belong to them.⁶ In the songs too, there (in songs) where⁷ they sing it, there are some (singers).

There, in the place where they stayed with them, the night (when) they came (=arrived), the days when they spent the night, the song of it, it (=song) is in (=among) the communal songs of the tradition, even today. They said, the land belongs to the people of Pergué.

¹ Alternative translations: ‘regardless of the way he fled’ and ‘regardless of where he fled (to)’.

² Since the settlers were distant ancestors, there is some fluctuation between ‘we (Jamsay)’ and ‘they’ in referring to them throughout this text.

³ Translation here, with ‘we Jamsay’ focused, is close to that in Grammar §4.4.3.1 (213). However, one could argue that ‘here in the country’ is also focused, as in the translation of the same passage in Grammar (690.b).

⁴ Lit. “Old Dianwely,” but here I gloss it ‘Ancient Dianwely’ since it is a location closer to Koro than to Douentza, and therefore very far from both of the modern Dianwely villages near Douentza (Dianwely Kessel, Dianwely Maoudé). The latter two are locally called by Jamsay terms meaning “old village” and “new village.” Translation slightly modified from that in Grammar ex. (229).

⁵ Original village, named after *Combretum glutinosum* trees.

⁶ The newly arrived Jamsay asked permission to use the land, but the people of Amba denied being the true owners of the land. Generally the oldest villages claim ownership of land, but may grant the use of it to others.

⁷ Or: ‘the way ...’.

They (=Jamsay) went and spoke to the people of Pergué. The people of Pergué and us people of Dianwely, they and the people of Amba, they (=Amba people) said: “the place up on top of this rock (=hill) isn’t enough for us (never mind any new arrivals).¹ (But) there is (an) empty pond² (around) here.”

Having taken us (=Dogon) (there) and showed (it to us), they told (=encouraged) us to stay there [focus]. That [focus] is the old village.³ Our first settlement. They brought us to the old village. They showed us, “here’s a place.” We settled and stayed around there.

They (=Pergué people) themselves, they did not (first) ask anyone and (then) bring and settle us (in) that place.⁴ There was nobody to whom they (had) said “here’s my visitor, (I leave him) (in) God’s trust (and) your-PI trust.”⁵ Having sat (=been settled) in the old village of Dianwely, hunters, the people of this village of ours, here in the place here where we are sitting (=living), when our kin (=Jamsay hunters) who had come to hunt (here) had seen the area, they now (=Jamsay villagers), they came and settled.

When they too were settling, they didn’t (first) ask anyone and (then) settle (there).⁶ They didn’t say to anyone “entrusting (ourselves to you-PI)” and (then) settle. Also they didn’t ask anyone and (then) settle. They merely hung up their shoulderbags and cut (=cleared land) and settled.

The house that they built first is in the new village (=Dianwely **Kessel**). Even today, that house still hasn’t fallen, that one is (still) there. The first shed⁷ that they built and went into (to live), that (same) shed having been transformed into a house, it is still there to this day.

We (=Jamsay) didn’t request of anyone and (then) settle, we didn’t ask and then settle, in that way we (just) came and settled. But between us (=Jamsay) and the mountaineers, we found them (already here) (at) our coming.

In the land, they (=mountaineers) furthermore used to not dare to go down (from hills to the plains). The way things were (then) in the country, slave-snatchers were going around.

If you-Sg were not a member of a crowd [focus], (or) unless you-Sg were armed, like (if) you alone or you two (=two of you) traveled (and) went out of the village and came (back), the way it is these days here, formerly it didn’t use to be like that. They (=slave-snatchers) used to catch, transport, and sell (people) like goats.

¹ Before the Jamsay settled in new villages in the open plains, all villages in the zone were located on the side or summit of mountains, for protection.

² ‘empty (=unoccupied) pond’ can be taken literally (i.e. componentially), but here it is (also) a toponym denoting a specific location.

³ The original Dianwely village near Koro being distant, the key distinction in the Douentza area is between Old Dianwely (lit. “old village”) and New Dianwely (lit. “new village”), which are some 3 km. apart.

⁴ They didn’t ask anyone’s permission first, before settling the Jamsay there.

⁵ Standard phrase used when entrusting someone (e.g. one’s child or guest) to someone else.

⁶ I.e. they squatted on the land, without asking permission from the “owners.”

⁷ Shelters, generally covered with thatch and open on one or more sides.

At that time, they were seeing the land. “(Up to) this limit it (=land) is ours.” Aside from pointing and showing (places down below) (and) staying on top of the mountain, (their) coming down below (onto the plains) and working (the fields) or chopping (=clearing fields), and saying “the place is ours,” between us (=Jamsay) and them (=mountaineers) there was none of that.¹

S: Between us and them, in traditional customs, is there or is there not anything that has united us?

A: Other than the “we found you-Pl (already here) in the land”, there isn’t any collective (=shared) custom of ours (=Jamsay and mountaineers).

S: Other than that, there isn’t any (collective) custom of ours?

A: That custom of ours being collective, it being a collective thing between us and them, ours and theirs being one (=a unified) thing, there isn’t anything of that (sort). If it’s theirs, it’s theirs. If it’s ours, it’s ours.

Jamsay 2004_03_12 translation

Blacksmith caste²

S: The function (=usefulness) of blacksmiths, in a village of Dogon people. Tell us about that.

A: There is no end to the usefulness (=functions) of the blacksmiths (caste) among the Dogon. For starters, a blacksmith is a griot,³ he’s one who goes on missions, a (kind of) kinsman. Fixing what (i.e. conflict that) has brought something that is amiss. Speaking. Standing (=being involved in) the process (“road”) of marriage; being sent on missions to somebody.

If you-Sg become a noble,⁴ a chief—, a chief with his counterpart (=another chief), sending his (own) griot.⁵ All that is (included) in the work of a blacksmith.

In addition to that,⁶ the usefulness of a blacksmith, it never ends. If they have borne (=given birth to) him,⁷ starting from when they have first borne him, continuing until his life has ended, there is no end in the function (=value) of a blacksmith.

¹ I.e. the mountaineers kept to the mountain, and merely claimed from a distance to own the plains but did not occupy or farm on them.

² Blacksmiths belong to the general category of (low-class) “castes” including other artisans (dye-ers, basket-weavers, etc.) and bards (griots). Collectively these groups are called, in local French, *gens de caste*. They are distinct from (traditional) slave and “noble” categories.

³ Griots (of which there are several types) are low-caste persons who sing the praises of nobles (those who are not slaves or of low caste) and serve as intermediaries among chiefs and nobles, for example resolving disputes.

⁴ I.e. not a slave or low-caste person (artisan, griot), or more specifically a member of a chiefly extended family. Literally “chief-child.” Sentence can also be translated ‘if you happen to be ...’.

⁵ I.e. the griot may be sent as a messenger from one village chief to another.

⁶ Lit. “if that has gone and passed.” Verb *gàrà* ‘pass’.

⁷ Standard phrasing of ‘when he is born’.

A blacksmith cannot be separated from (his) function(s). Because in the old days, it used to be a folding knife.¹ When they bore a child (=when a child was born), cutting the navel (=umbilical cord) was with a barber's (folding) knife, it was blacksmiths [focus] who had forged the folding knife. From the beginning a child, the (same) day on which they have borne him/her (=the day he/she was born), he/she has already seen (=experienced) the function of a blacksmith.

The folding knife, if (the question is), how do they forge it? If it's (=if we're talking about) long ago, (as for) Dogon people, (certain of) their own Dogon people, it was they [focus] who used to make iron (tools).

That's it, when they took out (=excavated) some gravel (with iron ore), went to Dewe,² set a fire, roasted (=heated) the gravel, (and) the gravel melted and it was transformed into iron,

the iron of (=from) that, it was (=became) a daba (hoe), it was an axe, it was a (regular) knife, it was that (aforementioned) folding knife, it was a spear, it was splinter gear (needle and tweezer set), it was a flint lighter--they used to extract (=get) all those from it (=iron). All that too is blacksmith work.

If they (=Dogon) said³ they (=enemies) had gone to a village, and had attacked⁴ a village, it was by iron (weapons), it was by the hand-work of blacksmiths. If they say (=ask), how does a blacksmith work the iron, (he answer is:) a blacksmith, he himself will heat the iron (on a fire).

If (one asks) with what (=how) does he heat (it), (the answer is:) he builds his forge-shed, he makes a forge-house, he makes (=forges) his anvil, a mallet (=large all-metal hammer) and a tong (for holding metal objects). All those are (made) with iron.

When he has set a fire, and has already put (on the fire) his iron which he is going to forge, he will pinch it (=hold it tightly) with a tong, he will put it (=iron) on the anvil, he will take his hammer,⁵ he will beat it and transform (=forge) it into what(-ever) he wants.

The blacksmith now, his work as blacksmith with these (methods) here (just described) will go forward here. He works (=forges) it strictly with iron. In Dogon country, the work of (making) a blacksmith's gear (=tools) is never finished.

Jamsay 2004_03_13 translation

Blacksmith women

S: Women of blacksmith caste now, their work, it is what?

¹ Used as a razor, etc.

² Place noted as an iron-ore quarry.

³ In 'if they said ...', the 'they said' portion often denotes awareness of an eventuality rather than utterance of a sentence, and it is often best omitted in the translation; see Grammar §17.1.4.

⁴ Lit. "covered, surrounded."

⁵ A wooden-handled hammer, distinct from the all-metal mallet.

A: There you are, blacksmith womans, their work. Between blacksmith womans and female Dogon, their work, they too, it (=work) doesn't end. If (we're talking about) what it is, marriage—. A (Dogon) woman too, there is a situation whereby she arises and gets involved in her (own) wedding; there is also a situation in which, while being together, a man and his woman (=wife) get into a dispute.

An acquaintance of a blacksmith woman, or a(nother) blacksmith woman, there is nobody among the (noble) women to whom she cannot go and speak, (just) like the way men can go (talk to them).

A (Dogon) woman can summon her blacksmith woman, say “it's like this”, and send her (the blacksmith woman) on a mission to a(nother) woman (who is) her (=Dogon woman's) friend.

She can (likewise) call her blacksmith woman and send her on a mission to a man too. The blacksmith woman, she now, she is the (trusted) messenger of her (freeborn) Dogon woman.

Aside from that, the main work of a blacksmith woman (is), as for them¹ (=blacksmith women) now, they make (“build”)² earthenware pots.³ The earthenware pots that they make, even tomorrow morning (=even nowadays), there is no house that a waterjar is not in. From it [focus] everyone drinks.

They (=blacksmith women) make what cools (water).⁴ It's they [focus] who make what one cooks with (=earthenware cooking pots). Earthenware bowls (=basins) for bathing,⁵ it's they [focus] who make them; small earthenware bowls for washing the face (=ablution bowls), it's they [focus] who make them.

All those (things). What(-ever) they use for (containing) water, what(-ever) they work⁶ (=use) with water, (it was) work that blacksmith women used to work (=do).

Today (=nowadays), since (the) white (man) has come, if not for the fact that⁷ (modern) kettles, (modern) pails, (modern) pots, uh-huh!, along with other similar things came⁸ (here), if not for what the white(s) brought, it (=pottery) used to be the work solely of blacksmith women.

¹ Shift from (generic) singular to plural.

² Lit. “build.” The object may be a mud-brick walls and roofs (hence houses and granaries), but also smaller containers shaped from earth or clay.

³ Jamsay dá:ŋá ‘earthenware pot’ includes both waterjars (from which drinking water is taken using a tankard or ladle) and traditional cooking pots. The translation ‘pots’ is intended to cover these two categories. Nowadays modern ceramic or cast-iron cooking pots are widely used, and are not called by this term, so dá:ŋá now most often denotes waterjars. dà:ŋà-nǎ, which occurs later in the text (cf. nǎ: ‘drink’), explicitly means ‘waterjar’. An explicit term for ‘cooking pot’, dà:ŋà jém (‘black pot’), does not occur.

⁴ Presumably the earthenware waterjar, which cools water by allowing some moisture to seep out and evaporate.

⁵ Lit. “basin of [(with) what they bathe water]”.

⁶ After using French *utiliser* in the preceding clause, he repeats the concept using the closest Jamsay equivalent ‘work’.

⁷ Lit. “if they didn't say ...”

⁸ Lit. “went and arrived.”

It was basins (=large bowls), it was earthenware pots (waterjars and pots), it was ablutions bowls, it was large waterjars (with necks), it was dye-ing vats, all the way to (=even) what one has animals drink (from),¹ all that was the work of blacksmith women. In the past it used to be like that.

S: With earthenware pots—. How do² they build (=make) pots? They make pots by taking out what and what (=by using what raw materials) like that?

A: Pots, the thing (=raw material) with which they make them. Pots, they make them with earth (=clay). When they have gone to a (drying) pond, a (seasonal) pond whose earth (=clay) is good, (one) that can make (good) pots.

When they have gone to the pond, have taken out (=excavated) that earth, have brought the earth, have arrived, have sat down, and have beaten (the earth) with stones, they make earthenware pots with it (=earth) like that.

Jamsay 2004_03_14 translation

Spinning and weaving

S: How³ did Dogon people use to make (=weave) cloth in the past?

A: Dogon people, the way they used to make cloth in the past. Dogon people begin⁴ (making) cloth by means of cotton. When they sow (=plant) cotton and cultivate it, when the cotton ripens, they pick it and sell the cotton.

Both (the) people who buy (it), and the women of the people (=farmers) who cultivate (it), they gin⁵ (=remove seeds from) the cotton. They remove the seed(s) from its interior (“belly”) and leave (them).

Certain people, they have (with them) a small flat grinding stone. Blacksmiths forge a ginning pin.⁶ That now, they have (it). They crush the cotton. When they have crushed it, the cotton seeds come out. They will keep (=save) those cotton seeds apart. It’s their need (=what they need).

Uh-huh. (As for) that ginned cotton,¹ they proceed to card² it; when they have carded it, they proceed to spin it. After they have spun it, if that thread that they have spun happens to be abundant, it (=thread) is (in) two parts.

¹ Drinking troughs.

² Lit. “(by) doing how, do they ...” In the Douentza area, pottery is still actively produced in Walo village.

³ Lit. “doing how?”

⁴ The remainder of the discussion is in the present time frame. Cotton is no longer grown in quantity in northeastern Dogon country but is still common farther south in Mali.

⁵ gùjǒ ‘pluck, de-feather (bird); depilate (animal hide); gin (cotton)’. Below, nòwⁿǒ ‘grind, crush’ is also used in the sense ‘gin (cotton)’.

⁶ The pin-like iron ginning tool is rubbed hard on cotton placed on the flat grinding stone to push out the seeds.

The one (=first) part they call “jeje” (=thin cotton thread). The (other) part they call “pande” (=thick cotton thread).³

If it happens that you-Sg have gotten a lot of thin thread and you have gotten a lot of thick thread, you will speak to the thread-lengtheners⁴ and you will pick up (=collect) and give (it) to the men.

They lengthen the thin thread. After they lengthen (it), if it happens that the (loom) shuttle has become full, they carry and deliver and give (it) to the weaver. The weaver now, he has what they call “shuttle-child” (=bobbin).⁵

When they have wound and put the heavy thread on the bobbin, they will enter (=begin) the thread that they are weaving like that. When they have woven and taken out (=finished with) their thread, it’s rolling (it) up. When they have cut up⁶ and sewn the fabric, boubou(s) and pants and (women’s) wrap(s), all (kinds of) garments come out from it.

That is how Dogon people get cloth (=clothes).

Jamsay 2004_03_15 translation

Sege caste

S: (The) Sege (people), in our Dogon country, they (=Sege) and (the) Dogon’s being together (=coexistence), what is its function (=usefulness)?

A: (The) Sege people, in Dogon country, the function of the (co-)existence between Dogon people and them. Sege people are griots. They are the messengers⁷ of Dogon people. They are the message-takers of Dogon people. They are the ones who make Dogon happy today (=nowadays).

That is their function (=usefulness). Because today (=nowadays), aside from that, Sege people are workers. It’s they [focus] who carve wooden bowls, it’s they [focus] who carve mortars, their men (do). They do begging also, it’s normal (=socially acceptable) for them.

Whether it’s a baptism (=naming ceremony for a week-old newborn), whether it’s a wedding (“new woman”) ceremony, both marriage rites (=bride being transferred to the husband’s house) and baptisms, a Sege person has a powerful position (=role) there.

¹ Lit. “cotton-flour.”

² Using a comb-like metal implement (card), the ginned cotton is carded so that the fibers are straight-lined, ready to be spun.

³ Weaving requires a thick thread (warp) that is combined at the loom with a crossing thin thread (woof/weft).

⁴ Spun thread is lengthened into long stretches by being wrapped many times between two or more poles planted in the ground some distance apart.

⁵ The bobbin is a long rotating wooden spool inserted in a cavity in the shuttle (which goes from one side to the other and back, in the loom).

⁶ Lit. “cut-cut ...” (reduplication).

⁷ I.e. they deliver messages or sent items.

Aside from that, (from) village to village, (from) region to region, after it has happened that people have come together and encountered each other and it's a fight, a man, (if there is) someone who pushes (=provokes) a(nother) person by aggression,¹ it's in (=among) Sege people. (They will say:) "Hey child of So-and-so! Hey child of So-and-so!"²

Goo³ people and Sege people, as for them now, that [focus] is their function (=role). When a village (population) goes to war, if it goes out (en masse) to the bush (to fight), a Goo person goes, a Sege person goes. If men come and go up ready for war, a Goo person is in it, (or) a Sege person is in it.

If a bad thing (=disaster) has happened, the ones who will convert it to good (=rectify it) are they. If you-Sg do something good (=a feat), the ones who will praise it profusely⁴ are they. Those who transform any person (=fighter) whom they follow into more of a man, those who push (=urge on) and propel forward the men (so that) their (=the men's) innate combativeness goes forward (=is increased), they are them (=Sege).

S: Their trade ("hand-work")?

A: Their trade (is:) carving wooden bowls, (and) the carving of wooden mortars. That is their trade furthermore.

S: Wooden bowls and mortars, with (wood of) which tree(s) do they carve them?

A: Wooden bowls and mortars. The trees that they carve them (with) are many. It's karité (=shea tree), it's balanzan tree, its *Sclerocarya* tree, it's *Daniellia* tree, its *Pterocarpus* tree.⁵ They carve from all those (woods). They carve from all those.⁶

¹ Lit. 'by being armed or ready for combat'.

² I.e. the Sege will call out publicly to the fighters to incite them to fight.

³ Another griot caste.

⁴ Lit. 'increase and speak'.

⁵ In order: *Vitellaria paradoxa*, *Faidherbia albida*, *Sclerocarya birrea*, *Daniellia oliveri*, *Pterocarpus erinaceus*.