

Recorded Texts  
11 21 02  
Nouhoum's School Story

**gidzàlà míjíò<sup>1</sup> gí bònà dá sùkùrù ní mà**  
childhood also 1.pl.subj pst be.there school in sub  
In my childhood also, we were there in school,

**ń lèè sùkùrù tòò ñkú ñ!dón hálì à tí tsm kólódzì kákù ìnàṅ**  
I do school take room one until INF TAM sting<sup>2</sup> CEG POSS.rooms four  
I went to school from the first class (CI) until the fourth year of CEG (3<sup>ème</sup>).<sup>3</sup>

**àmòsíbò ní ná à bà jé ! ɸám ámó sùkùrù**  
1.SG.POSS.beginning in and INF 3.PL.SUBJ TAM hold 1.SG.OBJ school  
When I started, before they would take me (in) school,

**dòò kóɸàm bədé bà ló àkí wàà á táá gòné**  
before POSS.reach<sup>4</sup> 3.SG.DEM.FAR AGR say 2.SG.OBJ that 2.SG.SUBJ lift hand  
from the time when your reach, they would tell you to lift your hand

**àkúópné gò tà sírá à bóló àkindí lán hálì à tí dè**  
2.SG.POSS.hand AGR TAM be.able INF reach 2.SG.POSS.head on until INF?? TAM CROSS  
If your hand could reach over your head until it crossed

**àkòòtò ká ñkón ná àtónṅ gón**  
2.SG.POSS.ear POSS behind with on.the.ground like.that  
below your ear (lit. behind towards the bottom)

**ò tò tó<sup>5</sup> gón bà ɸám àkí<sup>6</sup>**  
2.SG.SUBJ attain attain like.that 3.PL.SUBJ hold 2.SG.OBJ  
(when) you reached like that, they took you.

**ká tám kè bà ná kídé bòdzà ná**  
POSS time NEG 3.PL.SUBJ IMPF watch years NEG  
At that time, they didn't look at age,

**bà kídé ! kídé dáá àrè á kpór à tó mà**  
3.PL.SUBJ watch watch how? person 3.SG.SUBJ grow INF? attain SUB  
They looked at the size a person grew to.

**ò tá tòò àkúópné à tír àkindí lán**  
2.SG.SUBJ TAM take 2.SG.POSS.hand INF put.down 2.SG.POSS.head on  
If you took your hand to put it on your head,

1 This word has other pronunciations, e.g. mijáò, mijéò, etc.

2 Or cut, as it cut down a tree.

3 CEG is Collège d'Enseignement Générale, the equivalent of middle school and high school in the US. The French names for the classes are just frankly funky.

4 This is the noun, literally 'holding'.

5 The reduplication is a marker of verb focus, maybe contrastive verb focus.

6 He also added a last gón on the end, but when going back through, we determined that adding that would be ungrammatical.

à b̀̀l̀́ à t̀́ àk̀̀òt̀́ s̀̀l̀  
INF reach INF attain 2.SG.ear near  
to reach up to near your ear,

ò tá sírá à k̀́ú g̀́h̀ ná à tí d̀̀ àk̀̀òt̀́ ɸ̀̀è, ààí  
2.SG.SUBJ TAM be.able INF throw like.that and INF TAM CROSS 2.SG.POSS.ear a.little no(DISC)  
if you could throw(reach?) (it) like that, and go past your ear a little, no,

ò l̀̀è àr̀́ é nd̀̀éè bà ɸ̀́ám s̀̀k̀́r̀̀r̀̀ mà ná g̀́h̀.  
2.SG.SUBJ do person REL 3.SG.SUBJ hold school SUB and like.that  
you were someone they would take at school.

ná kí l̀̀è g̀́h̀ ɸ̀́éè bà k̀̀ò k̀́r̀́,  
and NEG.it do like.that TAM 3.PL.SUBJ TAM send.back  
And if it wasn't like that, they would have to send you back,

àk̀́ á k̀̀ò k̀̀ò g̀̀àd̀̀z̀̀íf̀̀l̀́ àk̀́ k̀̀ò l̀̀è g̀́h̀.  
2.SG.FOC 2.SG.SUBJ TAM return next.year 2.SG.FOC TAM do like.that  
you would return next year to do it like that again.

àm̀́ ñ l̀̀è g̀́h̀ d̀́áá àk̀̀p̀̀al̀́ àp̀̀ìò mà.  
1.SG.FOC 1.SG.SUBJ do like.that since? times two SUB  
Me, I did that twice.

ńr̀̀íùt̀̀àd̀̀z̀́á ná bá j̀̀è tí sírá à ɸ̀́ám àm̀́  
third.time FOC 3.PL.SUBJ TAM TAM be.able INF hold 1.SG.OBJ  
It was the third time before they actually took me.

àm̀́áẁ́éé àd̀́é tí l̀̀ò àm̀̀ím̀́éé̀t̀̀r̀̀ ẁ́àà k̀̀à l̀̀éè ùp̀̀ì ná òò  
1.SG.POSS.father 3.SG.DEM.FAR TAM say 1.SG.POSS.teachers that NEG.3.SG do child NEG DISC  
My father told my teachers (later?) "he is not a child, eh,

àg̀̀òh̀̀òmb̀́ g̀̀ò t̀̀ò à síb̀́á s̀̀k̀́r̀̀r̀̀ b̀́òh̀́ó  
3.SG.POSS.birth.certificate<sup>7</sup> AGR attain INF begin school finish  
His birth certificate has already attained (the age) for starting school

náá í ná l̀̀è ẁ́áá mà k̀̀ì ɸ̀́éè à f̀́aná ná  
FUT.FOC??? 2.PL.SUBJ IMPF do that SUB NEG.it TAM INF be.enough NEG  
And what you are doing, it is not good."

àm̀́áẁ́éé àp̀́ár d̀́òh̀́ à b̀̀òh̀́à k̀̀à pí à tí tà à j̀́idé  
1.SG.POSS.father 3.SG.POSS.younger.brother one 3.SG.SUBJ TAM FOC come INF TAM get.up INF stay.up  
One of my father's younger brothers, it was he who finally stood up for me

ńr̀̀íùt̀̀àd̀̀z̀́á nd̀́é k̀̀í k̀̀ì ì j̀́ó à l̀̀è g̀́h̀ ná  
third.time DEM.FAR INTERJ NEG.FUT? it? know INF do like.that NEG  
the third time there, no, they wouldn't do it like that,

ɸ̀́éè àd̀́é ág̀̀ìl̀̀òp̀́ à ts̀́í  
TAM 3.SG.DEM.FAR 3.SG.POSS.self INF go  
he himself (the father's younger brother) needed to go

7 Or 'judgement'???

á ! tí! tsí mà ná á tòò gòh à ló méétrè màná  
3.SG.SUBJ TAM go SUB and 3.SG.SUBJ take like.that INF say teacher to??  
When he finally went, he took (the floor) like this, to talk to my teachers,

ná bà jè tí kídé wàà ùpí n!dé kà lèé ùpì àdžàlà ná  
and 3.PL.SUBJ TAM TAM watch that child DEM.FAR NEG do child small NEG  
that they should see that that child was not a small child

ná bá jè à tí tšàm àmó  
and 3.PL.SUBJ TAM INF TAM hold 1.SG.OBJ  
And they took me after that???

ná n sùbà sùkùrù  
and 1.SG.SUBJ begin school  
and I started school.

n sùbà sùkùrù dé wáá wùù ná à tí tábó sùkùrù dé à tsí sùkùrù àfòlí ! ní.  
1.SG.SUBJ begin school DEM.FAR that INTERJ and INF TAM move school DEM.FAR INF go school new in  
I started that school, and then left that school to go to a new school

ná à tí lèè ñkòh wáá wùù ná à tí dòó ñkòh  
and INF TAM do there that INTERJ and INF TAM go.out there  
and was there until I left there

n dòó ñkòh mà ná n ! tí dži àkúkòlòm nà tsí kólódži mà  
1.SG.SUBJ go.out there SUB and 1.SG.SUBJ TAM eat sixth.room IMPF go CEG SUB  
When I left there, I passed the CEP<sup>8</sup> and went to CEG<sup>9</sup>

n ámuḡónò á lè ámó wàà  
1.SG.SUBJ 1.SG.POSS.older.sibling 3.SG.SUBJ say 1.SG.OBJ that  
and my older brother told me that

ñ tí! má pí bènèè ní à tí lèè bènèè kásùkùrù tšèi  
1.SG.SUBJ FUT 1.SG.SUBJ come Benin in INF TAM do Benin POSS.school a.little  
I should come to Benin to do Beninese school a little

ná à rí gífónò gipálómá ñgìdèè gí fàà à dór tšèi mà.  
and INF trap French entire REL AGR diminish INF be.heavy a.little SUB  
to learn good French that is a little more correct<sup>10</sup>

ì pàlàkà n pí bènèè ní à tí sùbà sùkùrù kàḡkú nsíbáká  
it left.things 1.SG.SUBJ come Benin in INF TAM begin school POSS.room first  
For that reason, I came to Benin to start the first year of CEG.

8 Certificat d'École Primaire, what one gets for passing the exam to get out of the equivalent of elementary school.

9 Collège d'Enseignement Générale, the equivalent of US middle school and high school

10 Apparently, people believe that the French in Benin is better than the French in Togo because Benin was always a French colony, while Togo was a German colony until after the first world war.