

Ūmano dą̄n tsə Kōtōno

journey one go Cotonou

A Journey to Cotonou

Author: DJABOUTOUBOUTOU SEIDI Aboudou Razak (JABUTUBUTU SEIDI Abudu Rasak)
(from Bassila)

Arɛ a ta da dulipa ni, ūmano ɔ lee bōkɔ busoŋsono bɔ
CL.A.man AGR.CL.A if?? be.there CL.É.life in CL.Đ.journey AGR.CL.d do CL.F.thing AGR.CL.F.good AGR.CL.F

a jɛ́ɛ ni.
INF give him

If someone is alive, a journey is a good thing for him (lit. to give him)

daa gą̄n ma, upalaka na gatfokol gu ɸaŋ ɔŋɔrɔ ma, n lə waa¹ :

Since? that? REL CL.?? .things.left and last.year we take CL.Đ.rest REL I say that

For that reason, what is left is that last year we had vacation, and I said :

<<jɛ́ɛ ma tsə a tu jɔ atəgatəna ka mpa mbombɔnɔ ba na jɔda
obligation? REL go INF? IMPF know our.cl.B.country POSS CL.É.village/city AGR.CL.É.big they IMPF call

waa Kōtōno ma. >>
that Cotonou rel

“It is necessary to go to know our country’s big city, that they call Cotonou.”

Gisono asiibi dą̄n gadzaka daa bōkɔŋkɔŋɔ tɔb n’ ɔdą̄n ma, na gu ta atija.

CL.B.good saturday one CL.B.morning since cl.F.hour ten and CL.Đ.one REL and we get.up(leave) here

Good, one Saturday morning around eleven o’clock, we left here.

Lɔrɔ ndee a na tɔɔ bɛrɛ tɔb n’ ɔnɔŋ ma, na gu kpa.

CL.É.vehicle AGR.CL.É.which AGR.CL.É IMPF take CL.Y.people ten and five REL and we arrive/enter

It’s the car that takes 15 people (minibus) that we entered.

daa lɔrɔ a jɛ́ɛ² lee isoŋsono malaŋ k’ u ŋə ɔnɔbɔdɔ dą̄n ɔnjɔntɸa laŋ
Since CL.É.vehicle AGR.CL.É necessity? do CL.É.good because.of NEG we see CL.Đ.difficulty one CL.Đ.path on

na.
NEG

Because of the fact that the vehicle was good, we didn’t have one difficulty on the road.

Gu kpa mpa ndee ba na jɔda waa<< Kpira >>ma, na gu rəgə a dɔɔ ɔdɔɔ.

we arrive CL.É.village AGR.CL.É.which they IMPF call that << Pira >> REL, and we get.down INF eat

CL.Đ.food

When we arrived at the village they call “Pira”, we got out to eat.

Gu saŋ kɔɔ tu kpa doodoo budu budą̄n ma, na gu saŋ kɔɔ rəgə a dɔɔ ɔdɔɔ.

we more again IMPF arrive far CL.Ū.places CL.Ū.some REL and we more again get.down INF eat

CL.Đ.food

When we would arrive again at various places, we would get down again and eat.

l je jɔ daa n’ arɛ k’ a jɔ gidu gidą̄n ajɔ na da ɪ na da ni ma.

1 waa is not optional.

2 dą̄a and jɛ́ɛ go together, always in same sentence

you self know since and man NEG he know CL.B.place CL.B.one never NEG since/how he? IMPF be.there him
REL

You yourself, you know how when a person has never known a place, how he behaves/carries himself.

Gɪ ta kpa baa mpa mpaŋa ndzi, aŋ³ tɪ taba bade ba tɪ lə amɔ ka
we if arrive each CL.ɛ.village CL.ɛ.whatever? CL.ɛ.FOC me,I IMPF ask CL.Y.these they IMPF say me it's
pjɔda.

CL.ɛ.name

When we would arrive at whatever village, I would ask and they would tell me it's (the village's) name

l tɪ lə waa ɪ lee bɔkɔŋkɔŋɔ tɔb gidzibɔŋɔ ma, na gɪ kpa Kɔtɔnɔ mpa nɪ.
it IMPF say that it do CL.ʊ.hours ten night REL and we arrive Cotonou CL.ɛ.village in

When it was almost 10 o'clock at night, we arrived in Cotonou city.

Baa aŋa 'ipine ɪ ta tine naa naa kide tʃaŋ.
each person his/her.CL.U.eyes AGR.CL.U if? open repetition.IMPF????? see clear

Everyone opened his/her eyes and looked around clearly (?)

Lɔɔrɪ jar a tɔɔ amɔ halt a tɪ kpa gadu-ɪ ba lə nɪ waa a rəgə amɔ naa
vehicle leader AGR.CL.A take me until INF IMPF arrive place-where they say him that il drop.off me so.that?
ma tɔɔ kɛkɛ a tsə afal amabɛɛɛɛ sul ma.

I take CL.ɛ.bicycle(zemidjon) INF go house my.paternal.uncle next.to REL

The conductor took me until he arrived at the place where they told him to drop me off so that I (could) take a zem to go to my paternal uncle's house.

A rəgə amɔ ma, n' a ʃɛɔ.

he drop.off me REL and he leave

When he dropped me off, he left.

l ʃee saa daa ma lee n' a jɛɛ kɛkɛ ma, adɔwaa kə ma na rəŋə gikiri
it necessity? stay since/how I do and INF look.for CL.ɛ.zem REL because NEG I IMPF hear CL.C.language
na.

NEG

It is left what I would do to find a zem because I do not understand the language.

N lee gəŋ halt a tɪ ŋə arɛ gadza k' adza⁴ dəŋ a taa amɔ.

I do like.that until INF IMPF see CL.A.man CL.B.god POSS CL.A.man AGR.CL.A.one AGR.CL.A take me.

I did it like this until seeing a man of God who took me.

Na n ʃee nɪ gabokəli ŋgadee ba ŋɔn a ʃee amɔ ma.

And I give him CL.B.piece.of.paper CL.B.that they write INF give me REL

And I gave him the piece of paper that they wrote to give me. [piece of paper with directions]

Gani dɔtɪ a kide n' a tsə n' amɔ a tɪ rəgə gafala k' ɔpɪntʃa laŋ.

that? FOC he look.at and he go with me INF IMPF get.down CL.B.house POSS path on

He looked at that [paper]and he took me (lit. went with me) to let me down on the road to the house.

Daa gadza ga ʃɪ sɔlɔ amɔ na pɪ ma, kə ma lee wahala dəŋ na,
since/as CL.B.God AGR.CL.B still love me and come REL NEG I do suffering one NEG

3 Short for 'amɔ, n'

4 Word only used in expressions such as this one

Since God still loved me while I came (traveled), I had no suffering.

na n mana ɲə amabɛɛɛ kpaaru ade tu doo gafala ni.
and I just.then see my.paternal.uncle at.that.moment that.one IMPF leave CL.B.house in(etc.)
And just then I saw my paternal uncle, he was just leaving the house.

Na n juda ni.
and I call him
And I called him

N' a tɔɔ amɔ a tsə na gafala ni.
and he take me INF go with CL.B.house in
And he took me to go into the house

Gisono n da Kɔtɔnɔ na tsə daa aɲɔɔ ipilimi ma⁵.
CL.B.good I be.there Cotonou and go since CL.A.month AGR.CL.A.entire REL
Good, so I was there in Cotonou and went for an entire month.

Kə ma na jɔ ufilufilu ndee ɔ da gɔɖzibɔɲɔ na gifilikɔnɔ ni ma na.
NEG I IMPF know CL.D.difference CL.D.which AGR.CL.D be.there CL.C.night and CL.C.day in/between REL
NEG
I didn't know the difference that there is between night and day

Adɔwaa bɛɛ ba ʃi na lee atɔma ni halɔ a tu koda gadza.
because CL.Y.person AGR.CL.Y still/always IMPF do CL.T.work CL.T.FOC until INF IMPF detach CL.B.day
Because the people still do work until dawn [lit. until day detaches]

Gɛɲʃi gidu gboo ga na kide gɔɖzibɔɲɔ daa gifilikɔnɔ ma, a ʃee ɪfətɔla laɲ
It's.like.this CL.B.place also AGR.CL.B IMPF look.at⁶ CL.C.night since/as CL.C.day REL it give CL.U?.lamps
on
It's like this, there in Cotonou, also, night is like day because of the lamps.

A tɔɔ adɪtɛɛɛ halɔ arɪsɔmɔ n na kɔɲ amabɛɛɛ na, na tsə ɔntɔma ni.
it take monday until friday I IMPF follow my.CL.ɛ?.paternal.uncle CL.ɛ.FOC and go his/her.CL.ɛ.work in
From Monday to Friday, I would follow my paternal uncle, to go to his work.

N'a naa kaɲa na ni na lee ɔntɔma.
and INF? TAM help with him INF do his/her.CL.ɛ.work
And I would help him to his work.

Asiibi n' alahadi ma, aɲ tu doo na tsə mpa k' ɔjɔɔ n' ambasoro.
Saturday and Sunday REL me,I IMPF leave/go.out and go CL.ɛ.city POSS CL.D.knowledge with my.CL.Y.friends
About Saturdays and Sundays, I would go out and [get?] knowledge of the city with my friends.

Gɪ tu sɛra a tsə gatunɔ, a tsə gadu-ɪ lɔɔru alaɲadza
We IMPF be.able INF go CL.B.beach⁷ INF go CL.B.place-where CL.ɛ.vehicle away.up.there

5 ma here came with daa, if daa then ma, essentially

6 or illuminate

7 compound noun, meaning 'bank of the river'

a na rəgə ma.

AGR.CL.Ḑ IMPF descend REL

We could go to the beach, the place where the airplane(s) land.

Gɪ ta kpa ka bɔdɔ, gɪ na pala pala bɛrɛ-ɪ ba na lee ntəma
we if arrive in? CL.Ḑ.places we IMPF leave leave CL.Y.people-who AGR.CL.Y IMPF do CL.Ḑ.work
ŋkəŋ ma bade ba jə atɔ ; atɔ gɪ pɪ.

there REL CL.Y.these AGR.CL.Y know us we.FOC we come

If we arrived at the places, we would leave(?) the people who worked there, they knew us; (while) we, we came [back]

Bokɔ-ɪ gɪ na jɛɛ ma, bade ba faŋa atɔ.

CL.Ḑ.things-that we IMPF look.for REL CL.Y.these AGR.CL.Y think/show us

The things that we were looking for, they showed us.

daa ba na lə waa bɛrɛ ba jɔgɔ Kotɔnɔ ma,

since they IMPF say that CL.Y.people AGR.CL.Y be.a.lot Cotonou REL

As they say that the people of Cotonou are numerous,

n lafɔ ŋə gəŋ adowaa gɪ tsə goja gɔbɔmbɔnɔ ŋgudee ba jɪda waa << Tokpa >> ma ni.

I really see that because we go CL.E.market AGR.CL.E.big AGR.CL.E.REL they call that <<Tokpa>> REL?? in

I really saw that because we went to the big market that they call “Tokpa”

Ŋkəŋ k’ a na ŋə gidu a kara ukei na, jee ɪ naa sara fɛlɛŋ fɛlɛŋ.

there NEG he IMPF see CL.B.place INF put/wear CL.D.foot NEG necessity it TAM? walk carefully carefully

There, one doesn’t see a place to put a foot, it is necessary to walk very carefully.

l ʃɪ na rəŋə rəŋə waa << Agoɔ, agoɔ >>.

you.PL(or it??) always IMPF hear hear that make.way, make.way

One hears only (that) “make way, make way”

Goja gude go na dʒɪ ifile ŋɔŋ ŋɔŋ ni.

cl.E.market agr.cl.E.that agr.cl.E impf eat cl.U.days agr.cl.U. five agr.cl.U. five in

That market happens every five days

Ama Kotɔnɔ n da aŋɔrɔ ipilimi ma, k’ɪ tə amɔ na adowaa

but Cotonou be.there CL.A.month AGR.CL.A.entire REL NEG it be.enough me NEG because

kə ma sərə jə budu tuutuuma na.

NEG I be.able.to know CL.Ḑ.places many NEG

But I was there in Cotonou for an entire month, it was not enough because I was not able to know (see) many places.

Ama n tɪ lee nija waa gadʒɪfɪlɪ n tə ma kɔɔ tsə naa ma tɪ lee daa ŋɔrɪŋɔ

but I IMPF do plan that CL.B.next.year I FUT I again go so.that I IMPF do since(for) CL.U?.two.months

ma, naa ma sərə jeejee gɪfɛbɔ.

REL so.that? I be.able.to stroll correctly

But I made a plan that next year I will go again to stay for two months so that I can look around properly.

Kotɔnɔ a lee ka atəgatəna Bɛnɛɛ ka mpa mbombɔnɔ

CL.Ḃ.Cotonou AGR.CL.Ḃ do/be CL.Ḃ.FOC our.CL.B.country Benin POSS CL.Ḃ.city AGR.CL.Ḃ.big
It is Cotonou [that is] that big city of our country Benin

adowaa ajɔkɔ ijunii ɪ da ŋkəŋ, na bɛɛ gboo ba jɔgɔ mpa nɪ paa.

because CL.T.things AGR.CL.T.all AGR.CL.T there and CL.Y.people also AGR.CL.Y be.a.lot CL.Ḃ.city in much
because everything is there and there are very many people in the city, also.