MUSIC FROM SARAMAKA

A DYNAMIC AFRO-AMERICAN TRADITION

Carved Saramaka wooden door, early twentieth century, Upper Surinam River, courtesy of UCLA Museum of Cultural History
SIDE 1

Band 1  Tree-Felling Songs
        malion bal
Band 2  Adumu Song
Band 3  History of Song
Band 4  Benta - instrumental
Band 5  Benta - instrumental
Band 6  Benta - instrumental
Band 7  Benta - instrumental

SIDE 2

Sékété Songs
Band 1  Two Songs of despair
Band 2  A Song of Despair,
       A Song of Love
Band 3  Song of a peasant
Band 4  Song of Rejection
Band 5  Song of Rejection
Band 6  Song for a maiden
Band 7  Song about a parrot
Band 8  Song of a Foreign Land

DRUMMING
Band 9  "The Flight of the Hummingbird"
Band 10  sékété
Band 11  for bantëmba
Band 12  "Talking Drum" against

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A DYNAMIC AFRO-AMERICAN TRADITION

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Music from Saramaka: 
A Dynamic Afro-American Tradition

Recorded and Annotated by Richard and Sally Price
The Johns Hopkins University

During the 17th and 18th centuries, many slaves escaped from the notoriously harsh conditions of plantation life in Suriname (Dutch Guiana), on the northeastern coast of South America. Mostly African-born, but representing a wide range of linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, these runaway slaves joined together in small bands, living in the dense forests inland from the plantation area. Until peace treaties were signed with the colonial government in the mid-eighteenth century, these communities' existence was dominated by a fierce guerrilla struggle for freedom even as the former slaves were engaged in the process of creating a new society and culture. In everything from subsistence techniques and language to marriage patterns and religious beliefs, these people drew on their diverse African heritages and shared plantation experiences to create new Afro-American syntheses that were very much their own.

Although such "maroon" (runaway slave) communities sprang up throughout plantation America, it is only in the forests of Suriname that their special socio-cultural adaptations have continued to flourish to the present day. There, each of six politically and culturally distinguishable groups, with a total population of some 50,000, maintains a delicate balance between fidelity to their ancestral heritages and experimentation with new cultural forms. The Saramaka, who number about 15,000-20,000, are one of the two largest of these groups (see Figure 1). Although for more than a century men have been spending long periods engaged in wage labor outside of tribal territory, and though material culture has always been partially dependent on imported manufactures, Saramaka cultural life retains a remarkable vitality in the midst of ongoing social change. Widespread polygyny, elaborate body ornamentation, swidden horticulture, numerous ritual complexes centered on ancestor worship and spirit possession, and a tone language used frequently in elegant oratory and subtle ellipsis are just a few of the many ways in which Saramaka life reflects its unique origins.

Music is one area of life in which Saramakas' African heritages and their unique New World experience are strikingly blended. The range of musical expression is extensive: songs sung in a number of esoteric languages are an important part of funerals, spirit possession rituals, the recounting of oral history, and so on; secular singing is a common and varied accompaniment to the daily round, an important vehicle for social commentary, and an essential ingredient in most large-scale public ceremonies; drums of different types are used to accompany dancing, summon gods and ancestors, and comment on the proceedings of tribal council meetings; the "hand piano" and, until recently, a gui (a small stringed instrument) have well-developed and constantly changing repertoires; and during the 1970s a generator-powered electric band has added a new dimension to the music of the Tribal Chief's village. In music as in all other areas of their highly elaborated aesthetic life, Saramakas integrate tradition and innovation to create a rich and vital dimension which permeates their everyday experience.


Most of the selections on this disc were recorded during a 2-year ethnographic study conducted in 1967-68 on the Pikirio. Bands 2 and 3 on Side One were recorded in the same area during the summer of 1976. Because several of the Saramakas who contributed to our recordings expressed a wish to remain anonymous, we have not indicated the names of individual performers; we are, however, deeply indebted to them both for the performances themselves and for commentary and discussion which have guided our understandings of Saramaka music. In choosing the selections, we have tried not only to include pieces which will appeal to non-Saramaka ears, but also to reflect the evaluative judgments of Saramakas. We are grateful also to the African Studies Association for a
Grant to transcribe and annotate our full set of Saramaka recordings (117 5-inch reels), to Adiane Franzen, a native speaker of Saramaccan, for the preliminary transcription of over 1000 typed pages of oral literature and song, and to the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University, for storage of the original recordings and provision to us of a full set of working copies. Our transcriptions follow the Saramaccan orthography proposed by Jan Voorhoeve (see R. Price, Saramaka Social Structure, p. 7).

**Side One, Band One**

Tree-felling songs (matjáu baai—literally "axe calls") traditionally accompany this major yearly phase of the horticultural process. This is the most dangerous of subsistence tasks, requiring rhythmic cooperation by axe-men, who are often perched precariously on platforms high above the buttresses of giant tropical trees. Such songs are identifiable by region and often by village, in terms of specific content, the names of local gods and ancestors invoked, and verbal phrasing. Little of the text is in everyday Saramaccan; much is in apuku tôngô (the language of apuku gods, or "forest spirits"), and the rest follows stylistic conventions proper to the genre of matjáu baai. In the course of a matjáu baai, the singer calls, often repeatedly, on a range of forest gods who have jurisdiction over the site, on other gods and ancestors to give strength to help the work go fast, on still others to bring wind to help blow the tree over, and on others to protect the workers from injury. There is a boastful, arrogant tone in parts of the performance; the men recount their strength, courage and skill, recite their praise names, quote appropriate proverbs, and command the women to fetch water and food.

The matjáu baai recorded here was performed at our request in 1968, by a Pikílo man who learned it from his father in a village some distance downstream.

**Side One, Band Two**

Adunká is a style of song/dance/drumming which was popular from at least the mid-18th to the early-20th century. Its role as the major secular song-style—dealing with current events, local gossip, affairs of the heart—has today been taken over by sákká (see Side 2, Bands 1-8). Adunká is now restricted to special ritual occasions, on which it is used to bring pleasure to those ancestors being invoked, for whom this was the everyday form of musical performance.

This particular adunká song dates from the last quarter of the 19th century, and was composed by the classificatory grandmother of the elderly woman who sings it here. In the song, a married woman calls out audaciously to her lover (called affectionately "Disëni-góó," or "Gold coin") in the midst of a large "play" (song/dance/drumming performance), for which he was one of the drummers. In defiantly announcing her affair to the community, she enlists the support of her sister, Joujáii. It is said that as a result of this song, the woman's husband—who was also present—grabbed angrily at her, holding fast to her skirt, and leaving her running naked through the crowd.

Disëni-góó, ju, Disëni-góó,
Akaínjá fu líba wójo, ju, Disëni-góó,
Aláá ta tá wënsè ju, Disëni-góó,

Mi nángó káí Disëni-ee a víöö tôngô
Baáá, mbé a tá píki, nôó mi tá jéei.

Man Joujaai—ée, so rë de
Mi nángó káí Disëni-ee a víöö tôngô,
Baáá, e án dé a duumí a kó a mi-ee.

Disëni-góó, you, Disëni-góó,
You with the bony forehead, Disëni-góó,
[...], Disëni-góó,
I'm going to call Disëni in violin language.

Brother, have him answer and I'll listen.

But Joujáii, so be it.
I'm going to call Disëni in violin language.
Brother, if he's not asleep, have him come to me.

**Side One, Band Three**

The encapsulation of history in song is one of the characteristic modes in which Saramacas preserve their memory of the past. This selection is a fragment of a narrative in which an elder, widely respected for his historical knowledge, recounts the events that celebrated the signing of the peace treaty with the whites in 1762. After songs of prayer and thanks (not included here), he performs a song originally sung by the men to mark the peace. He next describes the aléé, a dance which, with its accompanying singing and drumming, is still remembered as the climax of the treaty-signing celebration. The final song, in the adunká style (see Side 1, Band 2) commemorates the frustration of a woman whose jealous husband locked her in her house to prevent her from participating in the aléé dance, in 1762.

Dí de táki so kaba, dëé muñè táa wë fúu baijá.
Wômi táa bò baijá, bò wáí. Fiikkó.

Hên de basí:

Fií kó, kó, dénde, fií-oo
Kó dénde, fií kó
Kó dénde fií-oo
Kó dénde, fií-ee
Kó dénde fií-oo
Kó déndeëe.
Fi fi ko. Baaka fi, nko hen de dey mu nje baija alee.
Hen de baija:

Kalakati, tuliele, kalakati, tuliele.
Ndo dey mu nje baija gillin gillin gillin. De de yon; yon; yon... di wousu ta mbai, di kon dze ta mbai zzzz... De de ko njak kaba, de ta njak ta loontu, hen di yon, ndo hen we... di oto wana fika... "Mili, di bigi di u pe, a Baaka Wata fi aleele bigi mdo hli soni. Andi mbai i, i an ko?" Taa: "Oh! Di wousu sekol mi di sa a osu. Hen we mbai m'an ko. Di gbeli le kisi gbada Kwasi an ke mi ko." Hen di yon, mindi:

Distawendjemanu,
Andi mbai i an ko na aleele. H6666666666...
Gbela kisi gbada Kwasi an ke mi ko, H6666666666.

When they had finished talking [praying], the women said it was time to dance. The men said "Let's dance, let's celebrate, peace [freedom] has come. Then they called:

Peace has come, ko dende, freedom,
Ko dende, freedom's come.

Peace had come. After that, well the women danced alee.
They danced:

Kalakati, tuliele; kalakati, tuliele.
Then the women danced gillin gillin gillin [intensifiers].

The men danced, moving their hips...
The house... the village was going "zzzz..." When they finished this celebration, doing it all around [the village], then the woman... well, then... that other one who had not stayed behind [said]: "Child [term of affection], with the size of our celebration, at Baaka Wata [the village], with that fantastic alee, how come you didn't show up?" [She] said: "Oh! The man [my husband] locked me up and left me in the house. That's why I didn't come. That [untranslated pejorative expletive] Kwasi [husband's name] didn't want me to come." Then the woman sang out:

Distawendjemanu [the woman's name],

Why didn't you come to the alee? H6666666666... [Expletive] Kwasi didn't want me to come. H6666666666...

Side One, Bands Four-Seven

Bentá refers to two Saramaka instruments—the recently obsolete gaski-bentá (gourd benta or agabad), consisting of three "musical bows" inserted through a gourd, and the papai bentá (split-reed bentá or "hand piano"), made from 4-5 split reeds fastened tightly over two wooden bridges to a flat board (see Figure 2). Both instruments are held between the knees; the first is plucked and the second played with the index fingers. The bentá is a young man's instrument, played for individual pleasure and occasionally to entertain others.

Figure 2

The gift of bentá virtuosity is held to demonstrate an affinity with apáku gods ("forest spirits"), and it is said that some legendary players were able to walk on water across the river while playing. Like the rhythms played on the apáku and some other Saramaka drums (see Side 2, Band 12), the bentá plays rhythms that are "transformable" or "translatable" into verbal sounds. Some pieces imitate bird or animal calls, others comment on personalities or current events (much in the manner of adunki or sakaé songs—see Side 1, Band 2 and Side 2, Bands 1-8), others imitate rhythms played on drums, and still others are used in children's games (to indicate, for example, whether the seeker of a hidden object is "hot" or "cold"). For example, the second selection on band 4 is a satiric comment on an event in the village of Bofokule. We have several different verbal transformations of this particular bentá rhythm, one of which follows:
Djebikese kulé butá dí kându
Adombokui kulé butá dí kându
Djebikese kulé tí kangótì
Djebikese tungi mi tungi
Djebikese tá séti bò.

Djebikese runs to place the 'protection charm'.
Adombokui " " " " " " "
Djebikese runs tí kangótì (sound of his running).
" " tungi mi tungi [ " " " ].
Djebikese sets up the bow (a particular type of
'protection charm' in the form of a bow).

The performer of the four papi baniś pieces presented here
was considered in 1968 to be the finest player in the Pikifò
region. The title of the piece on band 5 is Apuku djombo
("the forest spirit jumps up") and Djebikese kulé buta dí
kándu ("Djebikese runs to place the 'protection charm'"),
on band 6, Gadu tumà ("drumming for the forest spirits"
in imitation of the rhythms played by the apintì-playing
member of the apuku drum ensemble), and on band 8,
Komantì tumà ("drumming for the komantì gods" in imitation
of the rhythms played by the apintì-playing member of
the komantì drum ensemble).

Side Two, Bands One—Eight

Sôkàri songs are Saramaka popular music par excellence.
Often cryptic, drawing on heavily poetic, metaphorical
language, they are composed by both men and women as
expressions of love, despair, admiration or derision, and
constitute a major form of social commentary. Many refer to
ongoing social relations involving spouses or lovers (co-wife
relations, adultery, divorce, and unrequited love) but others
sing the praises of a new outboard motor or a particularly
handsome cooking pot, commemorate a trip to Paramaribo by
the Tribal Chief, lament the flooding of a number of Sarama-
ka villages by a hydroelectric project, and so on. At any
time, a large number of sôkàri songs are popular in the
Pikifò villages (many of them originally from other regions
of Saramaka), and the stories behind them are generally
known. The most popular sôkàri songs remain in vogue for
no more than a few years, giving way to the best of the new
and more relevant songs constantly being created in every
village. (Of 156 songs that we transcribed in the Pikifò
region in 1967–68, not a single one was still being sung
there in 1976, though the lyrics were well remembered.)
The public performance of sôkàri songs accompanies almost
all large-scale celebrations, from funeral rites to the instal-
lation of public officials; in such settings, sôkàri manifests
the classic Afro-American "call and response" pattern, with
an alternation between soloist and chorus. Standard posture
for a female chorus is bent-at-the-hips, with hands clapping
close to the ground, while the soloist both sings and does
graceful tjéke dancing (see Figure 3). Sôkàri songs are also
enjoyed in informal or even solitary settings—paddling alone
on the river, harvesting rice, sewing in a doorstep, and so
on. Since the mid-60s, when tape recorders became a com-
mon prestige item, young men have been recording sôkàri
performances at public gatherings, and playing them back at
their leisure for entertainment.

In the following transcriptions, the chorus is indicated by
parentheses.

Figure 3

Band 1, A renowned female singer made up the following
song in 1968, after a local "madman" set fire to a Saramaka
village and destroyed many houses:

- Gaan gàdu-jéé! goon liba oo! Goon liba téki mi buta'
a pikí kujéè bòto, mi ku dèè bëe u mi, hën a buta a mìndì
wàta. Un Jéì wàn a dú mòò a lìfo; un si wàn a dú mòò a
múndu. (Mìndu a sonkém.) Mìndu a sonk-oó, kòndè, un jèì
wàn a dú mòò a lìfo.

Great god! Oh world! They've put me in a little calabash
boat, me and my kinsmen, and set it out in midstream.
Listen to another thing that's happened on the river;
look at what else has happened in the world. (Things aren't
right in the world.) Things aren't right in the world, villager, listen to what else has happened on the river.

There follows a song of despair originally sung by a woman whose husband had left for several years of wage labor in coastal Suriname:

- Má ó láfú móo-jëe; má má ó láfú móo nño-ëe; má má ó láfú móó.
  (Dí ómë dé a ënëmëna 1ën-ëë, má má dé lâfú móó.)

- I'll laugh no more; I'll laugh no more now; I'll laugh no more. (The man's at the "Léndëma River" [the artificial lake, i.e., on the way to the coast]; I'll laugh no more.)

Band 2. A woman made up this song in the mid-1960s, after a dam was built on the Suriname River and the northern villages of Saramaka began to be flooded:

- Salemâka tóóñbe-oo, Salemâka tóóñbe, lûku.
  Salemâka tóóñbe-ee, Salemâka tóóñbe-ee, gâdu.
  (Lëndëma-ee, Lëndëma-ee, Salemâka tóóñbe.)

- Saramaka's fallen, Saramaka's fallen, look.
  "", "", "", gods.
  (Lëndëma [the manager of the hydro-electric project],
  Lëndëma, Saramaka's fallen.)

The performer goes on to sing a love song, composed by a woman married to one man, but still in love with a former husband:

- Sonf mi lóbë-ëë, sonf mi lóbë-oo, sonf mi lóbë ve àn tâ gaññdi-ëë. (Sonf mi lóbë-ëë, sonf mi lóbë-oo, sonf mi lóbë àn tâ gaññdi-ëë.)

- The thing I love [the love I have] never grows old.

Band 3. This song is performed by the women who composed it after a physical fight with one of her co-wives:

- Kâbët mëë-ëë mëë? Këë! Dí sonf mí mi un tâ jëë. Dí gaññ-dë-ëë, dí sonf mí mi un tâ jëë mëë, téë è mi jëë dí gaññ gâdu bââ. Mi kâi gaññ gâdu-ëë, n bââ goôn jëë ëë mi. (U dí Jâlôô u mi dí mi këë èn-ëë.)
  Headman, brother! Ah! Have you heard what's happened to me?

Tribal chief, have you heard what's happened to me, to make thunder roar in my ears? I call out to god in heaven, I call out to the earth. (It's because of that whore of mine [co-wife] that I'm calling for help.)

Band 4. The man performing this and the following two songs is one of the most admired singers in the Upper River region, in part because of the special "raspy" texture of his voice—a quality highly appreciated for male Sëkâjë singing. We have no information on the circumstances surrounding the original composition of these particular songs.

- Bussë mi, bussë, bussë bââ; mi i bussë.
  Dí mi tâkâ n'ën dëd bââ mi bââ dëd déen
  Sëë. Kandë a pëkë jëndolëë.

- I've been jilted, jilted; I'm the one who's jilted.
  As I approach her doorstep, I call out to greet her.
  Perhaps she'll answer ...

Band 5.

- Mëë mi dë-oo, lëntë, nà sëmbë dë-ëë.
  Tëô fu më-ëë, lëntë, nà sëmbë dë-ëë.
  (Mëë mi dë-ëë, mëë mi dëë, lëntë, nà sëmbë dë-ëë.)

Occurring just once in the song:

- Dëd dë bët-ëë mi dë mi bëë dëë,
  dë gò fikà a bëtë këntë lëô sëe-ëë.
  Dí mëëna dëë zënu àn këë; mi dëë a fukà-ëë.

- Let me be, everyone, it's no one's fault.
  Uncle of mine, everyone, it's no one's fault.
  (Let me be; let me be; everyone; it's no one's fault.)

- The three brothers I have sent off to the coast to stay forever. The avenging spirit of my lineage is against me; I'm in a bad way.

Band 6.

- Gàntâ mëëë, anë dë yë? I mënu tûëë ë këë, no?
  (Mëëë, nà këë dëë, dëë; è sëmbë bi dëë, dë bi sa tëë i nômëë-ëë.)

Occurring just once in the song:

- A dë fàa mâmëtë, dí mi nàkî têë mi dë-ëë a lëmëë-ëë-dëë,
  èn mi së mi lóbë. Mañfëëë, a bëntë dëë pëfë. A dë sëônlë
  mâmëtë, dí mi nàkî têë mi dë-ëë a lëmëë-ëë-dëë, ën mi
  së mi lóbë-oo. Mañfëëëë, a bëntë dëë pëfë. M bââ nèsë-ëë.

Woman,

- Unattached, what's the matter with you?

Has your husband left you now? (Woman, don't die of despair.
Someone's sure to come along who will want to marry you.)
- On Saturday morning, I went along till I reached the landing-place, and there I saw her. My goodness, she hung down her head. On Sunday morning, ... [same].

Band 7. The 10-year-old boy performing this song claimed to have made it up, inspired by a folktale. In the tale, several birds try to carry a message about a certain tree from the sky god back to earth, but each in turn is distracted by loud bursts of thunder made by the god; the parrot is finally successful.


- The parrot sang "kaléng-kaléng." Then god made thunder so he would forget the message. But he didn’t forget it.

(The parrot got the name of the tree.)

Great god, listen! Great god! Parrot got the name of the tree.

Band 8. This song, sung by a child, was originally made up by a man imitating the Portuguese he had heard while engaged in wage labor in French Guiana. The "translation" into Portuguese was made after returning from the field (with the assistance of Beatriz Lavandera), without the help of informants.

- Sinjonlu, njénéle mií Sinjonlu, un jéi nō.

(Sinjonlu bondia-oo, wè m'an o jéi m'd d-ee.)


- Senhor, Senhor, you hear now? (Senhor, bom dia; well, I don’t understand any more.)

- I travelled till I arrived at Degágkondè. A Portuguese [Brazilian] man came to bring me greetings from someone. He brought me someone’s greeting. He called out, "O Senhor, como te vai, o que te prático escuta, escuta senhor." ["Oh, sir, how are you? Listen, listen to what I say."]

**Figure 4** represents three Saramaka drums: agidá (left, used exclusively in snake-god ceremonies), apniti (center), and deindein (right).

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**Side Two, Bands Nine–Eleven**

Drums are far and away the most important musical instruments in Saramaka. Different drum ensembles and particular styles of drumming mark each of a large number of specialized performance contexts—rites for apúkú ("forest spirits"), vodá ("snake-gods"), and kosti ("warrior/curer gods"), various stages of funeral rites, a variety of secular settings, and others. The recordings included here were performed at our request in 1968; the drum choir was composed of two apniti and one deindein (see Figure 4).

Bands 9 and 10 illustrate sekëtë drumming from two periods (the 1960s and the early 20th century), both recorded in 1968. The degree of stylistic change between these two parallels that between late adunke (see Side 1, Band 2) and modern sekëtë singing (see Side 2, Bands 1–8), as well as contemporaneous stylistic development in woodcarving and the other graphic arts.

The dancing (dôngbo sekëtë) that accompanies sekëtë drumming is the most prestigious, highly stylized of male dance forms. This virtuoso dancing permits the soloist to display remarkable creativity within a highly intense, mannered style. Dances are named and mimic; as in other Saramaka art forms, a premium is placed on the creation of new pieces, and the total repertoire is in constant flux. During the 1960s, dancen depicted scenes from the forest (e.g., the kôkôjí (a rodent) digging up sweet potatoes in someone’s garden, and the jaguar killing the turtle) as well as from the world outside (e.g., a steamship leaving the pier, and the copper machine at the Coca Cola Bottling Company in the capital). Band 9 is the drumming for "the flight of the hummingbird" dance, and Band 10 is sekëtë drumming in the old-fashioned, now obsolete style of 5–6 decades ago.

Band 11 illustrates drumming for bandamba, an old dance form that is now only rarely performed. Traditionally the secular dance of celebration, it was used until recently to welcome a man returning to his village from wage labor on the coast. Bandamba is associated with fertility and is used also in rites relating to twins. Performed either by women or, more rarely, by men, it is characterized by sexually suggestive movement of the lower torso, with hands held on the hips. Like adunke (see Side 1, Bands 2 and 3), bandamba is performed also at certain rites honoring 18th-century ancestors, to give them pleasure in the manner to which they were accustomed during their lifetimes.
Side Two, Band Twelve

The apinti is a Saramaka "talking drum" used at major council meetings, at certain important rituals, and as part of the drum battery in a number of musical contexts. When played as a solo talking drum at council meetings (ku'nu), its rhythms officially open the proceedings, summon and greet particular gods, ancestors and public officials, comment on current events, help set the tone for the meeting through the imaginative use of proverbs, dismiss people at the end, and so forth. Each drum phrase can be transposed into a rhythmically similar verbal form (either in one of several ritual languages or in special apinti language), which is translatable into Saramaccan. For example, the apinti rendering of the proverb "Smoke has no feet, yet it makes its way to heaven" (Saramaccan "Smoko an a fútu ma a nango o gádu") is "Listen"; opening call

Recital of the drum's "name,"

including words for its parts (wooden body, pegs, ties, head); call to supreme god and the earth

Call to junior assistant headmen;

remark that "many people have sat down"

Call to senior assistant headmen;

call to junior assistant headmen;

call to headmen

Call to senior women

Good morning; call to the Tribal Chief; proverb ("However great the problem, the Tribal Chief can take care of it");

prayer

Call to supreme god

and the earth
Kilîbe tente, odû akàsambile fu wàñ pandàsi; alîbête bente, bôbêtibête a fall; otîlibîtí tja ko bêdajà; kilîng king dia keng dia keng eti; kàsikàsi tógôtogèlê; fêbe tutù màfiakata bûnta nàsi betê; [piîmìsi]; atupeteesû atuû petee sù ahun wàsikan djànì bobo; [piîmìsi]

Call to the Tribal Chief; proverb
("The water hyacinth floats downstream with the ebb tide, but the tide will bring it back up as well."); call for liquor;
apologies to the elders; call to senior women; proverb ("When the mouth starts moving, hunger is afraid"); apologies (for anything bad that might have inadvertently been drummed); call to the "headmen of the river" (gods);
apologies

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Kokôtî bai batî; ansûka a pênde, màkàja pênde; gîdi gîdi bû a ro

----

Ahàla ba tata gànda volubutan;
dabikûku misî amësusu; [bègl];
[piîmìsi]; kokôtî bai batî;
kilîbe tente, odû akàsambile fu wàñ pandàsi; ma in tênë, ma in tênë bûa

----

Tjaketêke [...] [piîmìsi];
[gàmàkà màsà gànn gàdû];
ding ding ding ...., kokôtî bai batî; ding ding ding ....,
gîdi gîdi kùndu bi a kùndu;
gîdi gîdi bêjè; ding ding ding ...

Call to headmen; call to two important ancestors

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Call to city officials; proverb
("Smoke has no feet, but it makes its way to heaven"); prayer;
apologies; call to headmen; call to the Tribal Chief; proverb ("When a leaf falls in the water, it's not the same day that it starts to rot")

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Proverb ("You can't measure your foot against the Tribal Chief's"); apologies; call to the Tribal Chief and supreme god; "The Tribal Chief is walking [coming]"; call to headmen; "The Tribal Chief is walking"; call to senior assistant headmen; call for food to be brought; "The Tribal Chief is walking"