

## **Mamou Kamissogo**

### **Mamou Kamissogo interview**

Transcribed and Translated by: Kassim Diallo

**Jeli yere...anw ye jelimunu ye...(bon) jeliya be gnogongnen.**

[Even griots...we, the griots that we are...well, the griots are casted.]

**Ne ye jeliya damine kabini n'fintini [mais] ko be gnetaga ba la loni loni.**

[I began working as a griot since I was a child [but] all things we progress little by little.]

**N'mamuso tun bi donkili da. An bi tugu a ko. An be taa an jaatigiw baaro.**

[My grandmother was singing regularly. We followed her. We would go keep our hosts company.]

**An be taa an jatigiw deli ka na so. Wo b'an son sumanw na, wo ban so malola wo b'an son fencyaaman na an bi na so.**

[We would go asking for gifts from our hosts then return home. They gave us livestock(food). They gave us rice; they gave us many things and (then) we returned home.]

**Donkili dyaara ne ye [depuis] no wakite de la. N'mamuso tun ye donkili da бага ye.**

[Singing pleased me [since] that time there. My grand mother was a singer.]

**Donkiliw min do, a be se ka makari donkili da komi a be kasi komi a be se ka donkili fana da min I be ni so dya komi a be ye.**

[The songs I'm talking about..., she could sing a sad song that makes one cry just as she could sing an upbeat song that could make one on laugh.]

**(Bon), ne yere ma muso do tun be yan, ne no be so gnogon fe, an b'an la gnogon fe, an be wuli gnogon fe.**

[(Well,) me myself, there was one of my grandmothers, me and her slept together, we went to bed together, we got up together.]

**(Mais) akili....akili bana bala, a kun kolo mankene, (mais) a te se ne man.**

[(But) the spirit...she had a mental illness, her head was sick, (but) she was not aggressive.]

**A bi donkilila, a be se ka donkili damine sufe fo ka ta sogoma se.**

[She could sing throughout the night until the morning.]

**Komi n'ye dimisen ye, n'akili ka bon n'ma kalan; n'ma ekoli ke, (mais) be to k'an akili don aka donkiliw la.**

[As I'm a child, I'm smart. I didn't study. I did not go to school, (but) I memorized my songs.]

**N'fana bi sigi a fe, an bi donkilila. Komi a te se ne ma ka ban, a te se mogo ma an b'an sigi an b'an ka donkiliwla.**

[I stayed with her (and) we sang. Since she was not aggressive with me we would sit down and we would do our songs.]

**Hali ni nana k'I ba kan (enregistrer), a ti son. A bi donkili nin tige.**

[Even if you came to (record) her voice she would refuse. She would stop singing.]

**(Mais) ne be to ka dow tomo tomo a ko fa wo dow toora n'hakilila.**

[(But) I kept some of her (songs) and I memorized these.]

**Ala fana yake komi n'yere fana ye jeli den ye. Jeli yere ye yerelon ye folo. N'be n'yere lon.**

[God also made it so that I myself am the daughter of a griot. To be a griot, is to know yourself first. I know myself.]

**(Parce que) un bora jeli mununa, ne bora la Gine.**

[(Because) I have descended from griots, I come from Guinea.]

**N'fa wo bora....wolu mo kew bora Kirina ka ta sigi la Gine.**

[My father, he comes from...their grandparents come from Kerina\* before settlings in Guinee.]

*\* Kerina is a village near Siby, in Mali, on a road towards the Guinee border.*

**Ne ye Mamu Kamisogo, n'fa, Lassine Kamisogo.**

[My name is Kamisog, my father, Lassina Kamissogo.]

**Wolu taara sigi min? Lagine dugu jumen la? Wu taara sigi Kulibalidugu wu ba fo wo duguni ma ko kumajan bugu.**

[Where did they settle? In which part of Guinee? Coulibalidougou, We call this place Koumadjanbougou.\*]

*\* Koumadjanbougu means the place with long speech, referring to the long, memorized genealogies, songs, and ability to entertain with artistic speech.*

**Kumajanbugu a bi Banko mara de la a bi Sigiri fana marala. A faralenbe Sigiri kan.**

[Koumadjanbugu is found in the Banko province, and also that of Sigiri. It is also part of Sigiri.]

**(Donc) ne ye Jeliya damine fana [depuis] wo yoro la fo ka na sigi bi. n'sigilen be Burkina yan.**

[So I started functioning as a griot also from there until today. I live in Burkina here.]

**N'nana furu sababu la. N'sigile be yan (mais) maninkakan ma tunu n'ma (parceque) nwolo la a kono ka mo a kono.**

[I came here because of marriage. I have fully moved in here [but] I have not lost the Maninke language because I was born within (it) and grew up within (it.)]

**N'ma musow tun bi donkili la n'ye; n'baw ba la ye. (Bon) cyaaman tora n'kono [quoi].**

[My grandmother would sing for me, my mothers would sing for me; well, (Well) say, I hold many (songs) in my memory.]

**(Mais) ala yake bi n'fana be se la ka doni dini ke. Hali nin si korobayara mogo te koro ya a sya man.**

[(But), God has made it that today me too, I'm trying to get a little here and there. Even, if I have grown old, one is never older than his tradition.]

**I be se ka min ke jeliyala I ba ke (parceque) I sya lon.**

[That which you can do as a griot, you do it, (because) it's the tradition.]

**I mana ke cogo cogo, hali ni jeli keera ministry ye lon dola a bena laban a bena jeliya kuma le fo.**

[No matter who you are, even if the griot becomes a minister he will never finish without saying some griot verses.]

**(Donc) jeliya yere ye loni do de ye, hali ni ma ekoli ke (parceque) na foiri ye na tor'I kuna londo I be baara ken a ye.**

[(So,) the work of a griot itself is a kind of knowledge, even if you have not been to school (because) if we keep what you learnt seriously in your head, on day you could work with (them.)]

**Bi n’ma muso ka kuma min fora sisan, a bi keera tuma mina n’ka dogo wo. N’ka dogo; (Mais) an bi baroke.**

[My grandmother, whom I was just speaking of now, when all this was happening I was young. I was young but we would chat.]

**An be sigi. N’bi n’sigi wo kere fe. A be se ka donkili dola londola, a be kasi.**

[We would sit ourselves down. I would sit myself next to her. She would make a song that sometimes, would bring her to tears.]

**N’ba gninika ni ye mun dokili le ye e ya la ten. (Donc) komi a bi fola an yere ka kan le la, n’ba ye [immédiatement] a be kasi kun bo.**

[I would ask her, “what kind of song that was that you sing like that?” (So)as it was in our own language, I would see (immediately) that it was worth crying (for).]

**Londola a be donkili fana la ka n’nin so dya na ye. Ka moden dokiliw la n’ye, ka ban ka furu donkiliw la n’ye.**

[Other times she would do songs that would make everything happy. She did songs for the young girls and ended with songs for marriage.]

**N’fana bi kuma wo kumaw le kan komi kuma korow a bi fo tolo kura la (men) gnana.**

[Myself also, I only speak these verses because ancient verses were made so that they could be told to new ears.]

**Ni ala ye...hakili...I shi maya londo I be se ka kuma’a kan mogo werew fana ba me e fe ka meni ka la ka baara ke na ye.**

[By the grace of God...the spirit...if you become an adult one day you can talk about that so that other people can hear it thanks to you, listen to it and work it.]

**(Donc) kuma min bebe fe kuma man cya; n’ye jeli ye. N’fa ye Jeli n’ba ye jeli.**

[(So) I don’t have much to say. I am a griot. My father is griot; my mother is griot.]

**N’ba ye Danko, n’ba dow ye Kuyate; n’baw ye Kuyate, n’bow ye Diawara; n’baw ye Dyabate a wa n’yere ye Kamisogo jeli de ye.**

[My mother is Danko, my other mothers are Kouyate; my mothers are Diawara; my mothers are Diabate and me myself, a Kamisogo griot.]

**Alhamdulillah lahi rabbil ala mina (Arab) ka tila ka furu Konde jeliw ma. N’furula so min na a ni n’fa so a be so kele. Wu be ye kumajanbugu le ye.**

[Thanks be to God master of the universe, I finished by marrying a Konde griot, the family in which I have married, and the family of my father, are the same (extended family). They are all from Koumadjanbougou.]

**N'ce le nana ni n'ye Burkina yan. Alhamdulillah rabbi ala mina, n'sera yan fana basi man soro.**

[It is my husband that has brought me to Burkina here. Thank God, I have come here also with no problem.]

**Fo bibin na n'sera ka do ke n'yere ye Jeliya fan fe.**

[Up until today, I have been able to do many things for myself as a griot.]

**Kuma min tun be n'fe ka fo aw ye wo le ye. Hake to b'a kan.**

[That which I have said to you is like that. I ask forgiveness (for any mistakes.)]