

## Abjection and Relief as Panegyric Architecture in Tiv Praise Songs: Reflections on Targule's Oral Poems

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### Abstract

This study employs Julia Kristeva's theory of Abjection to explore abjection and relief as panegyric architectonic in the praise songs of Julius Targule. Abjection and relief as appraised herein, blur the boundaries of theme and style. As content and form therefore, abjection and relief synergize to constitute the grand design or architectural and even structural framework with which the ornament of praise is fabricated. Abjection and relief are two sides of the coin of Tiv praise songs, in that, the former is only a means to the veritable end of the latter. The re-presentation of abjection and relief in Tiv praise songs therefore, is a poetic style, a manner of speaking, or an artistic demeanour; and this aids in critical access into the fundamental nature of Tiv praise song composition and study. Abjection cuts across all and sundry, irrespective of gender, race, or class. It is not just an individual, experiencing a pathetic predicament but a communal code that symbolizes or epitomizes the general condition of societies. The burden for this study is also to make up for the gap in the scholarly neglect of Tiv praise songs and unpopular panegyric song artists as well as the segregation of theoretical tools for orature studies. This critical goal is what informs the choice of the panegyric sub-genre, the unpopular, unstudied song artist, and the theory of abjection that is used as analytical tool for this study.

**Keywords: Abjection, Relief, Panegyric, Tiv, Songs**

### Introduction

The Tiv people have an avalanche of creative expressions among which the singing art is one. Panegyrics is a sub-genre of Tiv songs which has not received adequate critical attention. In Tiv praise songs, the persona usually assumes a poverty-stricken, pitiable, vulnerable, abased, and needy posture that positions him or her for salvation or redemption from such unsavory ordeals. The plights or abased posture of the persona is what is referred to as abjection, while the attendant help he or she anticipates or receives is tagged relief in this study. Beyond meaning-making, the raw materials constituting the grand design of the structural frame of Tiv panegyrics is provided by the organic interaction between abjection and relief.

The invocation or revelation of the abject state of the persona arouses toxic, gory emotions that are cleansed at the threshold of relief. Through praise songs therefore, the Tiv people have been, all the while, exploiting the therapeutic fullness and/or advantage of literature in that, like tragedy, ill-emotions are aroused in the panegyric architecture but catharsis takes its turn through the attendant relief that ensues. Tiv praise songs as such, is a privileged borne of art that is licensed to re-present abjection.

To this end, the effort of this study is to open new vistas for Tiv orature in critical consideration and nudge scholars to reconsider the literary wealth that lay fallow in the pool of undocumented, unpopular, unstudied and neglected Tiv artistic products and song artists. This study therefore, is to examine how abjection and relief are artistically manipulated to fashion the aesthetic construct of praise. It is against this backdrop that abjection and relief shall be critiqued in Targule's "To Have Someone is Good" and "To be a Man is Not a Day's Job" to showcase how the perils, plights and/or ordeals of the poem persona and his quest for relief constitute the ingredients for plot structure and for the design of Tiv praise songs at large.

### A Glossary Review of Related Literature

Copious corpus of critical works exists on Tiv orature, a few on Tiv oral poetry and a very few on Tiv oral panegyrics. Apegba Ker affirms this when he says: “quite a good number of books have been written on various aspects of the Tiv people and society [...] but Tiv oral literature and particularly Tiv oral poetry and songs have so far been given a step-motherly treatment” (18).

Aside some Eurocentric, biased and non-incisive works about the Tiv culture and tradition by the likes of M. C. Abraham, Paul and Laura Bohanam and Charles Keil (see Ker 3 and Keil 22/43); Iyorwuese Hagher (1981; 1990), Emmanuel T. Jenkwe et al (1998), David Ker (2002), Mbaiver Nyitse (2006; 2006), Richard Aondowase (2007), Ayem Shoja (2010), Godwin Yina (2011), Moses Tsenongo (2012), and Apegba Ker (2015) are some among the Tiv scholars giving voice particularly to Tiv oral poetry and panegyrics.

However, most of these scholarly views on Tiv oral poetry either relegate or limit structural analysis, or avoid the panegyric sub-genre or neglect the unpopular panegyric song artists; or are devoid of a critical contemplation on how abjection and relief are skillfully portrayed in Tiv panegyrics, thematically and stylistically. The current study fills this lacuna as it judges Tiv panegyric songs from the lenses of abjection to reveal the abasement of the poetic voice and his attendant reward as a deliberate literary style which modulates also, the tempers and emotions of the audience.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical tool employed to frame this study is Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection, which was propounded in “Pouvoirs de l'horreur: Essai sur l'abjection”, originally published in 1980. The translation, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, which appears two years later, profoundly shapes the

Anglophone reception of her work. Since then, a number of studies about the significance of abjection in cultural life emerged, from within and outside literature as well as the visual arts. The Kristevian concept of abjection builds on the traditional psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, whose studies often narrowed in on the experience of the disintegration of personal distinctions, through neurosis in Freud and Psychosis in Lacan. (See Gross 2 and Cecelia 181-88).

From Kristeva's above-mentioned text, few, out of the basic elements of abjection such as: hallucination, fantasy, lack/want, nakedness, destitution, shame, poverty, death, deferred hope, mockery, beggarliness, degradation, backwardness, stagnation, hunger/starvation, sufferings/struggles, helplessness, and abandonment/rejection, to mention just eighteen are explored in the studied songs as indices of abjection that constantly buffet the persona and clefs a vent for relief.

### Method of Data Collection

The two songs under study, alongside several others by the same author were collected in a video (and some, audio) recording using a handset and a radio recorder. The two songs were first performed in the early 1990s and were performed again for documentation in February, 2017 by Targule Julius at his residence in Tse-Agberagba, Mbakyondo, Gwer-West Local Government Area of Benue State.

### Abjection and Relief as Panegyric Architectonics in Targule's Songs

This segment examines abjection and relief in “To Have Someone is Good” and “To Be a Man is Not a Day's Job” by Targule, to ascertain how these elements are exploited as construction materials for Tiv panegyrics.

“To Have Someone is Good” is a praise song by Targule, wherein, the poetic voice indirectly projects the cliché that “a tree

does not make a forest”. No one, in other words, is an island, and even islands are surrounded by bodies of water. To have somebody in this world thus is good, especially a worthy, wealthy fellow in the stature of John Nyisa. The song, “To Have Someone is Good”, under study, features abjection and relief as an architectural style. It is a concise praise song of 32 lines and 4 stanzas. The poem is founded upon the premise of an imagined hope; a fictitious assumption staged to conscript the commitment of the patron into the persona's larger-than-life sufferings. Beginning the first stanza of the poem with ballooned praise therefore, is a master craft literary style; a ploy or set-up, knitted by the poem persona to tow the patron on an accelerated eagle's wing of praise.

The plotting of the poem thus opens at the highest point of excitement – the climax – so that when the song's voice reveals his abjection, his plights, ordeals, predicaments and/or perils, at that steep slope of anti-climax, it will leave the already implicated patron with no choice than to oblige. The first stanza is therefore a poignant, undiluted inducement meant to sweep the patron off his feet and get him “drunk” to the point of offering a blank cheque to the persona, as seen in the sense group below:

It is very good to have someone in this world  
I have heard that  
John Nyisa has hosted a song festival for me  
And has tied down a pregnant dam for me }x2  
When that dam delivers a child  
I will in turn give the foal to Bem Ukule  
Tor Bem will ride baby horse  
While I will ride mother horse (Lns. 1-8)

In this imagined realm, in the days when as a symbol of wealth, nothing is priced more than a horse in the spatial location of the song, the persona fantasizes in ecstasy and celestial projections about his pregnant dam, and even already declares his will: to bequeath the foal to Bem Ukule, his son. It is fascinating

that all of these in stanza one begins and ends in the realm of rumour, wishful desire, and hallucination. Tiv praise songs therefore, becomes a vent for experiencing the unattainable and for expressing the underserved. This resonates with Kristeva's views when paraphrased as: abjection transports the abject to clefts of non-existence and to realms of hallucination (see p. 1). Hallucination and fantasy therefore, become a license that the poetic voice uses to foreshadow and flashback at will; which also makes haphazard, the plot structure and as such, makes the framework of Tiv praise songs, complex or episodic in nature. A discourse on abjection and relief is therefore, a veritable mound for forging panegyrics.

“It is very good to have someone in this world” (Ln. 1) as such, becomes the best beacon of faith to anchor the persona's praise. Men of integrity and substance do not like letting people down, at least, not to public notice. Here is the persona, declaring publicly, that he has someone in this world – a magnanimous patron and benefactor of repute – John Nyisa; who is revealed to have tied down a pregnant dam for him. This is the height of implicated praise; it is calling forth those things that be not as though they were. It is literariness and sublimity at its quintessence, a license to make real, the unreal and to access currencies and/or privileges and even spend them before one gets them. This is a notable skill in the design of the artistic frame of Tiv traditional praise songs because, from the reality of the persona's abjectitude notwithstanding, he creates a foreshadowing bridge with which to connect with his dream or idealistic relief.

Although John Nyisa Hemen urges the poetic voice to come, nevertheless, the want of clothes is a crucial challenge. To this, the daughter of Joseph Adinya, the wife of John Nyisa is beckoned upon to bear witness. In view of the song voice's abject poverty, nakedness has become his present continuous guest; as such, he cannot go out. And in simileic connotations, the persona likens himself to *ikyoor*, a large rat that moves about only at night.

Until nightfall, therefore, before his mothers will see him. This posture of abjection and quest for an urgent relief is architecturally depicted below in this wise:

John Nyisa Hemen urges me to come visit him  
Daughter of Joseph Adinya oh my mother  
The want of clothes has been my problem for long  
It is impossible for me to go out my mother  
I have become like *ikyoor* rat  
Until night fall before  
Mama, you people will see me (Lns. 9-15)

One of the prime indices of abjection is the want of clothing. When a man has come to a point when he cannot afford, at least, any form of cloth just to cover up his nakedness and protect himself from the harsh weather, or from shame, that person's poverty is at a chronic critical level that requires the emergency unit of neighbourly support. Consequently, abjection and relief become knotty ends on the architectural frame of Tiv praise songs as thus far demonstrated in Targule's song.

Just to prove how critical and un-hypocritical his condition is, the poetic voice reveals how that another man in Sengev, Ikyôn Num, also urges him to come, but the persona cannot go for the same reason of want of cloth. So that, in the instance of at least, two witnesses, the matter of his abjectitude will be confirmed. Just in order to avoid doubts, he presents a vivid description of this patron:

Someone else is inviting me in Sengev but  
There's no cloth to wear and go  
His name is Ikyôn Num  
He is a man from Sengev Stock  
From Ato's Compound  
Pever has invited me (Lns. 16-21)

It is discovered from the above sense group that, the issue of identity and roots feature conspicuously in Tiv praise songs, in

that, the poem voice calls everyone with their rightful and appropriate name. Naming in Tiv praise songs thus is beyond a nomenclature used to pointing at people; it is one's status, worth or if you like, quality, or essence as well as stature and standing in society. Fictional figures in the praise songs under study are named, sometimes, to the fourth generations and to their deepest roots or hamlets to evoke what such people stand for and who they are known for, which in turn, forges an identity for the person in question at that material time.

For instance, the "someone" who calls the poem voice on line 16 is revealed to be a man from Sengev stock, by the name, Num, the son of Ikyôn from Ato's compound. And just in case the audience may forget, the persona adds that he also goes by the name Pever. Such deep, detailed, elaborate and precise identification and/or "naminfication" of personae in Tiv praise poetry is not arbitrary but an architectural sling to catapult the song's voice from abjection to relief.

It is worthy of mention also, that abjection keeps possibilities in sight but between the abjected person and the relief, there usually abound obstacles to prevent the abject from getting the desired relief. This is important to the development of the plot architecture of Tiv praise songs because the delay of salvation and its subsequent revelation serve as reagents of suspense within the plotting of Tiv praise songs. Despite this pressing and important call for instance, the persona cannot attend, for want of clothes; as such, "My mothers... (the symbol of care and unconditional, untiring love), you people should "...keep supporting me" (emphasis mine, Ln. 24). One day "...when I am no more, you people will at least, rest" (Ln. 25).

Furthermore, Targule's "To Have Someone is Good" portrays death as the next of kin of poverty which, for so long now, has consistently maintained fellowship with the song's voice. This time around, if no one urgently helps him, death will succeed in paying for his dowry. And because the audience know the dread or horror of death... they should hurry and come to the persona's aid,

to relieve him from his abjectitude as lamented below:

But death has wooed me  
For too long  
This time death will pay my bride price  
Death has even posted a letter which has arrived  
Chief Ikyôn Adem I didn't reject it  
Death does a thing to someone that  
The person can never forget (Lns. 26-32)

The metaphoric, symbolic and personifying figuration of death in the above sense group is only a bid to project its gothic reality to the audience and to give claws to abjection so that the requisite relief to bail the persona from it should be treated as a matter of urgency. A readership of Celine's *Journey to the End of the Night* also excavates such elements of abjection as: suffering, horror, death, complicitous sarcasm and fear as featured in this oral poem under study.

The poem persona is so destitute, so naked, so much in want that daylight wears an insignia of shame upon him and prohibits him from making an appearance in the day time. He has become like a rat *ikyoor* who only comes out at night. No matter how pressing his redemption knocks, no matter how close his relief looms on his abject essence, he cannot go out due to his incapacitation or want of clothes. The daughter of Joseph Adinya, wife of Nyisa, whom he regards as a mother must therefore, look out for him only at nightfall.

As gleaned from Kristeva, on the topic of want as it relates to abjection, she observes how easy it is to pass too quickly over the word (5). Want therefore, stands out as the last born of abjection with fear as its watchword and phobia as its password. It is in that perpetual state of chronic want that abjection verifies one of its truest identities in the persona's life.

To this end, the persona is entangled with a want within want and in need of relief within relief. He, as a result, beckons on his mothers, the likes of the daughter of Adzege and that of Hwelegh to address his basic momentary need so that he can reach out for the larger relief awaiting him. "My mothers, keep supporting me//Someday when I'm no more then you people will rest" (Lns. 24/25). This is a contemplative, thoughtful, implicative set-up. It is like inciting their emotions and troubling the waters of their conscience. It is an appeal to the emotive bedrock of motherhood and humanity, so that the persona's relief from abjection will be sure.

Taken overall, the poem, "To Have Someone is Good" is a literary construct of praise that uses abjection and relief as an architectural style to build the poem technically, from its beginning to a logical close. Through the poem, one notices varying shades and colours of abjection, ranging from want to shame and death. However, by manipulating the figurative whims of hallucination, the persona is able to surmount all obstacles between his abject state and accrue requisite relief. At the end, such toxic emotions earlier aroused by the revelation of the abject ordeals of the poem persona are mopped up or purged; and he is seen riding his dam while his son, Bem Ukule, rides his foal.

Furthermore, "To be a Man is not a Day's Job" is also a panegyric poem by Targule that opens with a common aphorism, "to be a man is not a day's job". But because some people pretend not to be aware of this fact, he beckons on Ayongo, son of Dzerena, his song patron to take note of them. To strengthen the trajectory of his intentions, he goes through Dzerena's wife, the daughter of Ugende, adjuring her that someday when they would have helped him, people will then stop mocking him. In other words, as long as they don't help him, his mockery and degradation as less manly

will continue.

This, therefore, is a worthy pedestal upon which to peg the nail of commitment and response-ability of the patron towards the poem's voice. The poetic voice presents himself as an object of pity and a laughing stock on account of his poverty and throws the ball to the courts of his patrons, that, someday, their help shall salvage or relieve him from the sarcastic laughter of people. This is what is captured in the sense group below:

To be a man is not a day's job  
Ayongo son of Dzerena  
Some people don't know, they are laughing at me  
Daughter of Ugende my mother, no problem  
One day you people will help me out  
People will cease from mocking me (Lns. 1-6)

“To be a Man is not a Day's Job”, which opens with popular misconceptions that people hold about the persona due to his realities of want is therefore, a poem that uses the leitmotif of abjection and relief to knit it beautifully from beginning to its close.

To be a man requires collective, cumulative efforts at various junctures of life, and not even by the efforts or conjuration of a single person. But some people do not know or understand this fact, and so, they are busy laughing at the persona and mocking his abject condition; misconstruing his abjection for irresponsibility – how he cannot raise his shoulders in the gathering of men. Note that, the persona is already abject, but his abject state is worsened by the mocking laughter of people. In this tight corner nonetheless, he finds a vent for relief in the hope that someday his mothers in the likes of the daughter of Ugende and his patron, Ayongo, son of Dzerena will bail him out from people's mockery by assisting him.

The poetic voice, however, is quite sure of the favourable

response of his patron because Dzerena's place, where he sings, is an arena where *bashi* – liquid cash – will flow (see Lns. 22-27). He is optimistic that this call of Ayongo is to host him and nothing can stop it. For it is only when he is uplifted from financial oblivion that his kinsmen, the Ugende natives will covet him. This is because, in this race of life, so many have gone ahead of him and seem to be more successful. It is only at such opportunities as these that the persona can redeem lost glories and wasted years through their assistances and (in the poetic voice's words), “deliverance” that he receives from his benefactors. This rain of relief from mocking abjection is therefore, what is strengthened further in the call of Ayongo. The call, of which he tells “Daughter of Ugende my mother[that]//It is a must go” (emphasis mine, Lns. 13/14) is his pool of redemption where, he will garner the needed assistance that will silence his mockers.

Chagu Alhaji, son of Damkor alongside his wife, daughter of Magagbia also is in the arena. And the poetic voice has turned to him, informing him of his arrival. He presents a pathetic plight of his destitution to this patron of his, that, “The natives of Ugende//Have abandoned [him] in public” (Emphasis mine, Lns. 38/39). In other words, he has been rejected, dejected and is afflicted with the plights of destitution. He has no helper and no place to lay his head. This too, is his tragedy, as will be seen below, that only Chagu Alhaji, in his financial prowess can redeem. This is the reason why he will not stop at anything until he becomes envy in the land:

You people should give me assistance  
Let the natives of Ugende covet me  
People have gapped me for too long a distance  
Daughter of Mbalagh my mother  
I have come for you to save me (Lns. 18-21)

Abjection is here seen to take the shade of backwardness.

People have not only mocked and laughed at the persona, but they have also gapped him a long distance. Only the collective, yet committed help he receives from his patrons can deliver him from such abjectness.

The good news however, is that this abject condition of his struggles, mockery, helplessness, poverty, backwardness and pitiable position has instigated a positive response from Chief Asoo Ikyôgen, who has also arisen in person, beckoning on his retinue of wives to come and relief the persona of his burden:

Chief Asoo Ikyôgen of Aga has arisen by himself  
He's calling on the retinue of his wives to come out  
To come and reward Ortiev's songs  
With a spray of cash this time around  
That he should forget about the  
Sufferings of Tyôshin land (Lns. 22-27)

His abjection, in essence, is a reflection of the collective sufferings of the entire Tyôshin land. As such, rewarding his song with material and financial gestures is a requisite relief and/or bail from, not just his personal abjectitude, but a mop action from all the sufferings of his people. More so, the rise of Chief Asoo Ikyôgen, son of Aga, the worthy, wealthy fellow is a deep, figurative expression of the readiness to display wealth as well as the willingness to salvage the persona from backwardness and stagnation. The rise of his patron thus signifies the persona's rise in fortune as well as his resurrection from the sheol of poverty which marks the emergence of his deliverance. Note that, Ikyôgen's rise is with the entire retinue of his wives, and he calls upon them to come and reward the poetic voice, here identified as Ortiev. This reward should be with a spray of cash this time around so that he should forget about the sufferings that rise from Tyôshin land like vapour.

Their response with the requisite relief is therefore pertinent because if they don't, poverty is killing the persona. His abjection has become a thing of public ridicule and nuisance. He is not just a burden to himself but also to the entire community. The persona's abjection is seen here as a killing poverty:

Doctor Joseph Akuma Tôgô  
Poverty is killing me  
Daughter of Ikpya my mother  
See I have become a beggar  
Who goes about begging people  
At various family settlements  
Even if I'm given little on the hand  
I will receive with much appreciation (Lns. 28-35)

Abjection has so eaten deep into the fabric of his soul to the point that the poem persona has become a beggar who goes up and down begging, just for crumbs to keep body and soul alive. Three images of abjection are here invoked: death, the want of food and beggarliness. Poverty has ambushed the poetic voice roundabout to the end that it is killing him. As a result, he cries out for help because he sees, feels, thinks and eats poverty; the walking, talking poverty has placed a knife on his throat and is pulling it apart. It is only when his patron, Akuma Tôgô helps him therefore, that he will be delivered from poverty, death, starvation and beggary.

Furthermore, from the above sense group, for abjection to reveal its identity in the want of a most basic need as food is a sonorous call to all who could hear. The issue of the song persona's abject estate has become a state of emergency; thus no matter how small the help is, none should withhold. Everyone should bring in their quota to salvage him from this abject condition.

Chagu *Alhaji* son of Damkor I have come

Daughter of Magagbia  
The natives of Ugende  
Have abandoned me in public (Lns. 36-39)

The last element or shade of abjection we notice in this poem is that of abandonment and/or rejection. The poem voice is seen to have been abandoned like one infected with Hansen's disease to bear the brunt of his sufferings alone.

In this abject state of poverty, degradation, mockery, backwardness, abandonment, want of food, beggarliness, suffering and death nonetheless, one can gather and surmise that the persona cries out for relief so that he will be restored to normal fellowship with humanity; so that he can at least, feed and live; so that he can catch up with those who have gapped him in life; so that he can forget the sufferings of Tyoshin land; so he can stop begging; so that poverty will not kill him; so that he will be salvaged from mockery and for once, become envied by his people of Ugende; and so that he will make out something from life – to become a man.

### Conclusion

In consociation with the burden of this research, the songs, “To Have Someone is Good” and “To Be a Man is Not a Day's Job” have been appreciated from the viewpoint of abjection, to x-ray a common denominator of abjection and relief as the panegyric architecture and building blocks that subtend those traditional praise songs from the beginning to end. The persona's abjection thus reflects the general abjectitude of mankind. As such, this study is a call unto action just the same way that the relief of the persona requires urgent, committed and communal response. Paying attention to all the issues of abjection and relief as portrayed and explored in the studied songs is significant as it will help individuals and society at large to cushion themselves against the pains, gory experiences or abjection that bile-ducts the

modern world.

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## Appendices

### Transcription

#### "U Lun a Or Doo"

U lun a or hen tar ne doo tsô

Iyange m ungwa me,

John Nyisa ooo

Mirim imo dzerem ngô nyinya

U lun iyav ooo } X 2

Nyinya la yange un a mar wan yô me gema

Wan la me na Bem Ukule ooo

Tor Bem a hendan wan nyinya

Mo di me hendan ngô nyinya ooo

John Nyisa Hemen kaa er, mo m gba zan an ooo

Wan Joseph Adinya, mama wam ooo

Ican ikyondo ngi ayongo a mo kpem

Ka kwagh u me due ze ngôm } X 2

Mo m hingirinja er ikyoor

Tugh a ile ve

Mama ne nenge a mo ye

Or ugenegh ngu m yilan ken Sengev kpa

Ikyondo ngi i za nga

Iti na yô, ka Ikyôn Num

Ka or u shin Sengev

Hen ya u Ato } X 2

Pever yilam ve eee

Wan ugenegh mama ngôm

Wan u Adzege ngôm

Ungô av nôngo nen a mo

Ayange me lu ga di tsô ne mem eee

Man ku shiôr mo

Ica kpa gba yum

Kwa ne ku a kemem

Man ku tindi leta nyôr

Tor Ikyôn Adem m venda ga

Ku ngu er kwagh a or  
Mayange nan a hungul ga ooo

**“U Lun Or ka Tom u Yange Imiôm ga”**

U lun or ka tom u iyange imiôm ga  
Ayongo u Zerena  
Ior mbagenev fa ga mba senem eee } X 2  
Wan Ugende ngôm kwagh ga ooo  
Ayange tsa ne nôngo a mo ior a mem ilyam ooo  
Mwa imo hen ape u  
Bashi a duwe ve ooo  
Ayongo u Zerena  
Or Mba-Buande ngu yilan nem  
Er, m za hen ya na un a nambem ishor ooo  
Wan Ugende ngôm ka kwagh u a bunde ga ooo

Ior Kohol Asoo Ikyôgen  
U Aga kpa ngum yilan aaa  
Wan u Hwelegh m va ve ooo  
Nôngo nen a-mo  
Ityô Ugende ve tômun  
Ior wundum ishiva lihe yum  
Wan Mbalagh ngôm  
Mva me yimam ooo

Tor Asoo Ikyôgen  
U Aga kighir a mogh iyol na  
Ngu yilan kasev nav u due ooo  
I va nambe Ortiev amo aingye  
A hungul kera a ican i tar u Tyôshin ooo

Dôkutô Joseph Akuma Tôgô  
Ican ngi wuanem  
Wan Ikpya mama wam yô nenge mo  
M hingir bega u zenden zamber ior

Sha adôa ya ve  
Ana m sha we kpa me ngohol mo me laha ga ooo

Chagu Alahaji u Damkol mva ve  
Wan Magagbya Tyô Ugende gbihim tembe ooo

**Translation**

**“To Have Someone is Good”**

It is very good to have someone in this world  
I have heard that  
John Nyisa hashosted a song festival for me  
And has tied down a pregnant dam for me }x2  
When that dam delivers a child  
I will in turn give the foal to Bem Ukule  
Tor Bem will ride baby horse  
While I will ride mother horse

John Nyisa Hemen urges me to come visit him  
Daughter of Joseph Adinya oh my mother  
The want of clothes has been my problem for long  
It is impossible for me to go out my mother  
I have become like *ikyoor* rat  
Until night fall before  
Mama, you people will see me

Someone else is inviting me in Sengev but  
There's no cloth to wear and go  
His name is Ikyôn Num  
He is of Sengev stock  
From Ato's compound }x2  
Pever has invited me  
Daughter of Hwelegh mama my mother  
Daughter of Adzege my mother  
My mothers, keep supporting me  
Someday when I'm no more then you people will rest

But death has wooed me  
For too long now  
This time death will pay my dowry  
Death has even posted a letter which has arrived  
Chief Ikôn Adem I didn't reject it  
Death does a thing to someone that  
The person can never forget

**“To be a Man is not a Day's Job”**

To be a man is not a day's job  
Ayongo son of Dzerena  
Some people don't know they are laughing at me  
Daughter of Ugende my mother no problem  
One day you people will help me out  
People will cease from mocking me  
I am singing in a place where  
*Bashicash* will flow  
Ayongu of Dzerena  
The Mbabuande man is calling me  
That I should come to his house  
So he will host for me a song party  
Daughter of Ugende my mother  
This is a must go

Iorkohol Asoo Ikyôgen  
Of Aga is also calling me  
Daughter of Hwelegh I have arrived  
You people should give me assistance  
Let the natives of Ugende covet me  
People have gapped me for too long a time  
Daughter of Mbalagh I have come for you to deliver me

Chief Asoo Ikyôgen of Aga has arisen by himself  
He's calling on his wives to come out  
To come and reward Ortiév's songs  
With a spray of cash this time around

That he should forget about the  
Sufferings of Tyôshin land

Doctor Joseph Akuma Tôgô  
Poverty is killing me  
Daughter of Ikpya my mother  
See I have become a beggar  
Who goes about begging people  
At various family settlements  
Even if I'm given little on the hand  
I will receive with much appreciation

Chagu Alhaji Son of Damkor I have come  
Daughter of Magagbia  
The natives of Ugende  
Have abandoned me in public