

## market day

by [Kimiko Karpoff](#) on Friday, February 4, 2011 at 11:45am

This is number 7 in a series looking back on my trip to Ghana one year ago.

Tuesday, February 2, 2010  
Going to market in Battor.



Sunrise on the way to market.

God feels present, deep and vast in this place. Deep thrumming.

An hour in caught myself thinking about getting fired egg on bread and milo (a hot malted chocolate drink) at the market and thinking "after this walk, I deserve it." And checking myself.

Our culture creates such a sense of entitlement. These women and girls are walking this path with heavy loads and it just is. They deserve no less than anyone else and if its about reward for effort, somewhat more than most. They carry their goods to market which sell for a pittance.

God is palpable in the dust and the air. Still present without the trappings of electricity, power, cars, conveniences.

As we walk along people call to me "yavoo" (white man). A boy asks, in mime, for a soccer ball. An old man with a cane, in english, asks if I notice how much they are suffering from lack of good transportation, all of their needs.

When people ask me for things I find a wall of defensiveness going up. I cannot give everyone what they want. What do they want from me? My scarcity defense turns on. I am not a wealthy person.

But so much more wealthy than people here. At home I own a car. I came to Ghana. Yet the notion that people want something from me fills me with anxiety. Like they'll all show up at my house one day or something. I don't have time, I don't have space, I can't buy all of these things.

And yet I am here and the village has welcomed me, fed me and understandably see me as a person with means.

I can give what I can and need not fear that I will be pulled apart.

Not primitive, primal, what is essential, close to the ground.



People and goods waiting to cross the stream on the way to market.



Laden boat crossing the river to market.

And so the market turns out not to be in Battor but on the boat landing at the river. No fried egg sandwich. Had a 10 peswa (roughly 10 cents) plantain ball. Lots of people selling cassava dough, peanut butter, flip flops, pots & bowls, ceramic grating bowls, toothpaste, fruit -- bananas, plantain, pineapple... -- empty large tin cans. People in more traditional dresses, and women in jeans and t-shirts.

Buyers of cassava dough just stick their fingers into the dough.



Market at Mepe



Traditional and contemporary meet.

Last learning circle, looking @ images and names for God, I was drawn to an African symbol for God. Means "accept God," a mawuka symbol called Gye Nyame in the Alcan language. Now I am here in the land of the Gye Nyame. It is on the plastic chairs that are for guests and the head of the house. (others sit on benches and stools)

Accept God.



Gye Nyame

So we have come to Battor. I've been hit upon by a man who would not hear "no." Charity told the man who shared our cab (so he said) who is a driver without a car that I could help him get money for a car and he wants to call me. And I went to get fried egg on bread and there was no fire. So I had a milo but Charity was with me, insisted on coming, but obviously wasn't in the leisurely cup of tea mood (which doesn't exist here) so I drank up and we left.

"Expectations."

I realize how privileged I am to have choice in my life. The choice to spend 3 hours walking to a market. Or not. Adexor-Kpodzi to Mepe is like Surrey to Vancouver. People go from Surrey in [to Vancouver] all of the time. But going from Vancouver in [to Surrey] is too far. The people here just go to market. But in Mepe I met a woman from AK who says she doesn't visit because it's too far.

The highlight of the afternoon, motorcycle ride from just past the boat landing to Adexor. Saved about one hour of walking. But more, was fun. And I was aware I was on the back of a bike wearing nothing resembling gear, with my daypack on and a plastic bottle of kerosene on my lap. And not a sealed bottle, kerosene in an old plastic bottle with a cracked lid. The ride was on a combination of hard dirt road and narrow foot path. The driver was good. Very fun.

A motor bike just pulled in with a very small child in front, the driver and now two kids on the back, in bare feet. I was thankful that at least I had my sunglasses on when I got on the bike.

The cost of the pineapple I bought was topic of conversation as I was cutting it. 80 peswas (75ish cents.) By contrast I went to buy a mango for 20 peswas only to be told 20 was for the pile, take them all (about 5). So I guess the pineapple was expensive. It was small. but sweet. I shared with everyone which also caused some stir. And the way I cut it too.

The moto ride gave me a chance to have a chat with Wade until Charity came. Also nice.

Seen as person of privilege, treated with privilege. How do I treat people?