

## STORIES

mbosa      sede      ido  
word    medicine    eye

mikia    bollo    pata    meche,    modi    ga    biniki  
men    two    went out    journey    one    with    provisions

modi    ga    biniki-sa.    mate    ai    meche    sumbodi    fordo.  
one    with    provisions    not    they    made    journey    days    eight

memu      ambinikiye      tai    binikiye;      za-ni-ye  
man    possessing    provisions    eat    provisions    companion    his

lode-ni    mosse    ariafu-no    ka    wono    biniki-ko-ye  
asked    him    here    turban    my    you    give    me    provisions    your

la    ni    taiyi    isse    kuti.      won-ko      dauwo-no.  
that    I    eat    he    refused.    (I)    give    you    trousers    my

isse    kuti    ba    ka    ndolu    do    ni    won-ko    binikiye  
he    refused.    if    you    want    that    I    give    you    provisions

kafa    ni    poddu      idi-kwoi-ye.    emme    kala,    tan?  
then    I    pluck    out    eyes    your    this    difficult,    how?

kille dowi. mate bushi, mate indi  
if that is so<sup>1</sup> sit down they spent the day<sup>2</sup> they got up

ga zoni, mate ai meche, mate ndai be  
with evening they made journey they went place

ngele, mate yewe ga woti showi siri. kuzum kine  
sleep they halted at bottom tree big hunger confused<sup>3</sup>

ga zi-ni isse forri yo ka poddi idinoye.  
with body his he said well you pluck out eyes my.

isse wo-ni ammaye. isse saiyi. isse koni oyum-ni  
he gave him water he drank he took hook his

boom, zowi gaga idoniye, dibbe, poddi  
black<sup>4</sup> (he) put into eyes his (he) pierced (he) plucked out

ido-ni-ye bollo-ngi. isse sore. isse forri, kai!  
eyes his two all he fell down he said alas!

tinin i sa. isse koni karai-ni isin ndai zi-ni.  
never (I) do not he took loads his he went body his<sup>5</sup>

bodi i-ye julur ndetu. isse inde dowi  
night (it) made when cold came he rose (he) sat down

ga zi rewe. ga bodi yaro bollo ndetu, modi  
against trunk tree with night birds two came one

ndin ko pai dar, yewe komba rewe  
came from direction east (he) perched branch<sup>6</sup> tree

ko pai dar; anzoni-ke ndetu yewe  
from direction east; a western one again came perched

ga komba ko zoni. andar-ye porri i yaro  
on branch from west eastern one the said to bird

<sup>1</sup> (Kanuri *atekwoya*.)

<sup>3</sup> (H. *dame*.)

<sup>5</sup> (Hausa *ya taffi abinsa*.)

<sup>2</sup> (Hausa *wuni*.)

<sup>4</sup> i. e. iron.

<sup>6</sup> (Lit. shoulder.)

zoni-ye, na ni kume lajabi, maleka  
west the, I I have heard wonderful thing<sup>1</sup> angel

azi-forraiyi. yaro pai dar-ye ni kumengwoyi kumi  
told. bird from east the (said) I hear leaves

rewe emme ba memu garuwoyi iwo gaga ido-ye  
(of) tree this if man pick rub into eye

idumbukum a-dara zini. isse kumawoye isse gare  
(of) blind man healed body his he heard he plucked

zowi gaga ngirki-ni. isse inde ai meche ndai  
put into bag his he rose made journey came

ga goru ndai yewe ga banni memu modi.  
to town came halted at the place (of) man one

isse yawu-ye ambonno-ye ndetu ko  
he halted when master of the house the came from

banni moi bolli-ni-yi na 'lalle  
(the) place (of the) king met him (he) said 'welcome

lalle', mate ai kele isse gedde bonno.  
welcome' they made salutation he entered (the) house

elleni amma, isse saiyi, boi emme isse  
(he) brought him water he drank after that he

lodeni 'ka ndingo?' isse na 'ndingo' rusa-ko  
asked him you come? he said (I) come. work your

le? isse na memu ba ga ido-sa ni eweti.  
what? he said man if with eye not I open (them)

isse na 'aiya!' isse na naam manemme. isse na,  
he said really! he said yes (it is) thus. he said,

dowi. isse ndai banni moi isse forri moi, 'na  
sit down. he went to king he said (to) King (I) tell

<sup>1</sup> Hausa *alamerin*; Kanuri *ajap*.

albishir', ni kume mbosa, ngorofi a-bon-no a-ewe  
 good news I hear word stranger in house my he open  
 ido. moi porri 'aiaya!' isse na 'mana emme'. moi na  
 eye King said really! he said thus King said  
 ndiko ka ndetu ga isin. isse ndaiyi, na ndi  
 go you come with him he went (he) said rise  
 mun ndai banni moi. isse nde. mate ndai ai  
 we go to King he rose they went (they) made  
 salaam im moi. moi wundutu ba-ni bukum-ye.  
 salutation to King King called daughter his blind  
 isse na allati amma. mate elletuwi. isse rossi kumi  
 he said bring water they brought he mixed leaves  
 showi ga amma, semme gaga ido-ye, ido  
 (of) tree with water (he) rubbed into eyes the eyes  
 awa zini. moi ai garia wo-ni suba  
 (he) opened body his King made glad gave him gown  
 wo-ni dauwo wo-ni dara wo-ni jebbe  
 gave him trousers gave him riches gave him slaves  
 wo-ni ba-ni mate ai kaibonno. memu amma-ye  
 gave him daughter his they made marriage man other the  
 ndetu, i talaka, yewe ga bon-ni. isse  
 came, (he) made poor halted at house his he  
 mo-ni-sa. isse a dondu kula isse a tinayi. andara  
 knew him not he sews calabash he eat rich man  
 isse forri, 'kai ka mo-na sa?' isse na, 'aa ni  
 he said you you know me not? he said no I  
 mo-nka-sa.' andarai na, 'emme in a de, ka poddu  
 know you not. rich man said this I is you plucked out  
 idi-noi-ye'. isse zo ko-ni. andarai katatilo-ni gwon,  
 eyes my he put head his rich man heart his good

na 'ga lelinsa'. koni suba wo-ni.  
 (he) said with nothing (he) took gown (he) gave him

talaka lode-ni ka wa darako-ye koan?  
 poor man asked him you get property your whence?

moi wona-wo inko ni awa idi ba-ni.  
 King give me because I open eyes (of) daughter his

talaka lode-ni, ka wa sede-kwoi-ye koan?  
 poor man asked him you get medicine your whence?

isse na, ga be ka poddu ido-noi-ye. isse na  
 he said at place you pluck out eyes my he said

ina-ke ni ndina 'be sedi-ye. andarai-ye  
 I too I go (to the) place medicine the rich man the

wo-ni rimu wo-ni jewe wo-ni biniki.  
 gave him camel gave him female slave gave him provisions.

isse nde isse ndaiyi. ndai gamma  
 he rose he came (he) came (to the) bottom

rewe-ye. ga rina-su-ye yaro ndingo yaron dar-ye  
 (of) tree the with arrival their bird came bird (of) east the

ako rewe-ye. yaro i zoni-ye bajin memu, yawutu  
 on tree the bird from west the smelt man halted<sup>1</sup>

koni dolti isin yaro modi-ye yawutu kont  
 took swallowed him bird other the halted<sup>1</sup> took

jewe dolti. mate bollo-ngi rimo-ye botin  
 female slave swallowed they two all camel the tore<sup>2</sup>

dadalla.  
 asunder

takawo.  
 (it) finish

<sup>1</sup> Hopped down.

<sup>2</sup> Cut.

## TRANSLATION

Two men went on a journey, one had provisions but the other had not. They travelled on and on for a week. The man who had provisions was eating them when his companion said, 'Take my turban and give me some of your provisions,' but he refused. Then he offered him his trousers, but he refused, saying, 'If you want me to give you provisions, you must let me pluck out your eyes. The other man replied, 'This is a hard saying, how can I do that?' 'Very well then, sit down.' They spent the day there. In the evening they got up and travelled on till they came to a place to sleep. They halted at the bottom of a big tree. The other man was overcome with hunger and said, 'All right, pluck out my eyes.' He gave him water, he drank. Then he took an iron hook and put it into his eyes and pierced them and plucked both of them out. The other man fell down and said, 'Alas, I have never had this done to me before.' The first man took his loads and went about his business. When night came, it got cold. The other man got up and sat down against the trunk of a tree. At night two birds came, one from the east and perched on the eastern branch of the tree, and one from the west and perched on the western branch. The eastern one said to the western one, 'I have heard a wonderful thing which an angel told me. If a man pick the leaves of this tree and rub it in the eyes of a blind man, he is cured.' The other man heard this, picked some leaves, put them in his bag, got up and travelled on till he came to a town. There he came to the house of a certain man and halted. And after he had halted the master of the house came from the king's house and met him, and said, 'Welcome, welcome.' They saluted each other. He entered

the house and brought him water, and he drank. After that he asked him, 'You have come?' He said, 'I have come.' 'What is your business?' He said, 'If a man has lost the use of his eyes, I can open them.' The master of the house said, 'How wonderful!' He said, 'Yes, it is true.' The master of the house told him to sit down and went to the king, and said to the king, 'I have good news for you. A stranger in my house says he can open people's eyes.' The king said, 'How wonderful!' The other said, 'It is true.' The king said, 'Go and fetch him.' He went and said to the man, 'Get up, we're going to the king.' He got up and they went and saluted the king. The king called his daughter who was blind. The man said, 'Bring water.' They brought it and he mixed the leaves of the tree with water. He rubbed it into her eyes and they were opened. The king was glad and gave him gowns and trousers and riches and slaves and his daughter, and they were married. Then the other man came, he was poor, he halted at the rich man's house, but he did not recognize the rich man; he sewed calabashes for a living. The rich man said, 'Don't you know me?' He said, 'No, I don't know you.' The rich man said, 'I am he whose eyes you plucked out.' The other man hung his head. But the rich man had a good heart and said, 'Never mind,' and took a gown and gave it him. Then the poor man asked him, 'Where did you get your riches?' He said, 'The king gave them me because I opened his daughter's eyes.' Then the poor man asked him, 'Where did you get your medicine from?' He said, 'At the place where you plucked out my eyes.' The poor man said, 'I shall go to the place for medicine also.' The rich man gave him a camel and a female slave and provisions. The poor man rose up and came to the bottom of the tree. When they arrived, the bird

from the east was on the tree. The bird from the west smelt the man, he hopped down and took him and swallowed him. The other bird hopped down and took the female slave and swallowed her. Between them they tore the camel asunder.

FINIS.

---

omme mbosa soma  
 this is the word (of the) deaf and dumb man

gurzo modi ga gurzo modi ammeche gaga goru.  
 man one and man one traders inside town.

wai dodo wai dodo, shap, modi duti  
 (they) got money (they) got money, all (two). one spent

dodo-nye modi dapi dara. pete ndai  
 money his one kept (his) loads. (they) departed (they) went

bon-so botibonno dara zowi dara  
 (to) house their. (the) master (of the) loads (he) put loads

zowi gaga rewe zowi. talaka  
 (he) put in fork of a tree (he) put. (the) poor man

soba-nye porri ni ndoluniyo do-bike dara. bike  
 friend his said I want that I take (the) load. (he) took

dara, meche-mu-ye ga bo ganua. porri  
 the load let us journey to (the) gate (of the) city. he said

na ndolu dara-no-ye isse forri in a ni kuma  
 I want load my he said I I understand

mbosa-ye-sa. in a ga mai-ye burkuna-ku ga  
 word the not. I and you I shall complain you to

bo bani moi. porri  
 (the) gate (of the) sitting place (of the) King. (he) said



tan? botibonno-dara-ye porri nawomme dara-ni.  
 how? the master (of the) load said this load his.

lode-ni soba-nye. ai bele. in a rimo ni  
 (he) asked him his friend. (he) made noise. I deaf I

kuma mbosa-ye-sa isse muka. moi goru porri  
 understand word the not he dumb King town said

naemme dara dara-ni. botibonno dara pete. alabari  
 this load load his master load went away. news

im modi mainshi. mainshi. n damu bani moi.  
 to one old man. old man let us go sitting place King

mate ndai. dowi. lode-ni. isse forri gorzo  
 they went sat down. (he) asked him. he said man

isine montu mbosa. moi isse forri tan mbosa-ye?  
 he knows word. King he said how word the?

kai ka kume mbosa? isse forri ni kuma  
 you you understand word? he said I understand

mbosa. muka ai bele. mainshi isse forri  
 word. dumb man made noise. old man he says

'no-nko'. isse forri aa ni pulle-ka-sa. moi  
 'mother your'. he said no I curse you not King

isse forri kai ka kume mbosa. moi forri bike  
 he said you you hear word. King said take

dara-ye ka wo-ni botibonno. moi forri duwa-ni-yi  
 load the you give it (to the) master King said flog him

muka duwa-ni-yi ga bilala i sota  
 (the) dumb man flog him with a whip he makes lie

ngor-ni.  
 tie him.

takawo.  
 (it) finish.

## TRANSLATION

Two men were traders inside a town and both made money. One spent his money but the other saved his. They left the town and set off home. The one that had a load put his load in the fork of a tree. His friend, the poor man, said, 'I'll take your load for a bit, let us continue our journey to the gate of the city.' When they got there, the owner said, 'I want my load.' The other man said, 'I don't understand.' The owner said, 'I shall complain to the king about you.' The king said, 'What is the matter?' The owner said the load was his load. Then the king asked the friend, but he made uncouth noises, meaning I am deaf, I don't understand, I am dumb. The king said, 'This load belongs to him' (the deaf and dumb man). The real owner went away and told his story to a certain old man. The old man said, 'Let us go to the king's seat of justice.' They went. They sat down. The king questioned the real owner, who said, 'This old man knows the deaf and dumb language.' The king said, 'What is the matter? Do you understand the language?' He said, 'Yes, I do.' The dumb man made uncouth noises. The old man said, 'He says your mother is a ——.' The man said, 'No, no, I didn't curse you.' The king said, 'Oh, you do understand.' The king said, 'Take the load and give it to the real owner.' The king said, 'Flog the dumb man, flog him with a whip; he is a liar, tie him up.'

FINIS.

## AN OLD MAN'S ADVICE TO HIS SON

Memu andi i nem ga moto wundu  
 man there was (he) made near to death (he) called  
 lawuni por-ni kadda ka i ja fodo; kadda  
 son his (he) said to him lest you do things four; lest  
 kai i soba ga be moi-sa, kadda  
 you make friendship with son (of a) king not, lest  
 ka zai manshi mundu ga hon-ko-sa, kadda ka  
 you put old woman in house your not, lest you  
 ai soba ga ampawa-sa, kadda ka ai  
 make friendship with butcher not, lest you make  
 kaibonno ga banni andarai foyo-sa.  
 marriage with daughter (of a) rich man new not.

## TRANSLATION

A certain man who was at the point of death called his son and said to him, 'There are four things which you must not do; don't make friends with a king's son, don't put an old woman in your house, don't make friends with a butcher, and don't marry the daughter of a *nouveau riche*.'

## SALUTATIONS

*bérka sáto*, good morning.

*Allah de zogo godón* } may God allow you plenty of life.  
*Allah de-ko godón* }

*zoko ái garán*, may your life be prolonged.

*mána émme kafa dšhi*, that will do, good night (lit. 'till to-morrow').

*kafa poti módi*, good-bye (lit. 'till one day');

## NOTES ON BOLANCHI

35

### PROVERBIAL SAYINGS

*lákka ga póti-ni*, even a broken calabash has its day ; i. e. you never know when a thing, even a broken calabash, may come in useful.

# THE LANGUAGES AND PEOPLES OF BORNU

Being a Collection of the Writings of

P. A. BENTON  
//

With an Introduction by  
A. H. M. KIRK-GREENE

VOLUME ONE

NOTES ON SOME LANGUAGES OF THE  
WESTERN SUDAN



FRANK CASS & CO. LTD.

1968

TAH