

Gambian Studies No.3

MANDINKA DILEMMA STORIES, PUZZLES, RIDDLES,

AND PROVERBS

(Mandinka texts and translations)

By

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SAN FRANCISCO

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## GAMBIAN STUDIES- MANDINKA LANGUAGE

Material edited and translated by David P. Gamble

### Gambian Studies

- No.3 MANDINKA DILEMMA STORIES, PUZZLES, RIDDLES & PROVERBS.  
28 pp.
- No.4 ACCOUNTS OF SUPERNATURAL BEINGS, SPIRITS, WITCHES, WEREWOLVES, NINKINANKO, ETC. FROM THE MANDINKA NEWSPAPER, KIBARO.  
11 pp.
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39 pp.
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16 pp.

It should be noted that the material is all in the old Mandinka script. In modern writing vowel length is shown by doubling the vowel - aa, ee, ii, oo, uu. In the 1950s the assumption was made that those who spoke Mandinka would have little trouble in dealing with vowel length.

In the old style	ny	was used where	$\tilde{n}$	is used now.
	ng	" "	"	ŋ " "
	ch	" "	"	c " "

The sounds	ai	are now written	ayi
	ei		eyi
	oi		oyi
	ui		uiw etc.

Original versions 1976, 1977.

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Kibaro: September 1952, p.3

TALINGO

Ke kiling ne sotota,  
a ye dinke fula le soto,  
do to mu Keba le ti,  
do to mu Modi le ti.  
Silang lung kiling na,  
i fa ko Keba "ta nna kunko to  
seno la."  
Keba k'a ye ko "m bi ta le."  
I fa tata Modi ya,  
a k'a ye ko,  
"Modi ta nna kunko to seno la."  
Modi k'a ye ko  
"m bang, m mang ta."  
Silang Keba meng "yo",  
a mang ta kunko to  
bari Modi meng balanta  
nata ta seno la kunko to.

Silang nying ding fulolu,  
jene ye i fa dinyan ne kuo  
k'a ye ?

(J.M.Saidy)

A TALE

There was once a man,  
he had two sons,  
the name of one was Keba,  
the name of the other was Modi.  
Now one day  
their father said to Keba "Go  
to my farm to work."  
Keba said to him "I am going."  
Their father went to Modi,  
and said to him,  
"Modi go to my farm to work."  
Modi said to him  
"I refuse, I won't go."  
Now Keba who (said) "Yes",  
he did not go to the farm,  
but Modi who refused  
ended by going and working on  
the farm.

Now of these two sons,  
which did his son's duty  
to his father ?

(D.P.Gamble)

Kibaro was a Mandinka newspaper, produced by the Senior Commissioner's office, under the auspices of Mr. Humphrey Smith, and ably edited by Mr. Sherif T. Jammeh. Publication began in August 1950 and continued until 1956, eleven issues a year normally being produced.

Kibaro: March 1953, p.3

KEO NING KUTO

Ke kiling ne tata wulo kono,  
a ye kuto tara laring,  
"murukuj", a muruta suo kono,  
a boring boring to.  
A futata dorong a mang hani  
kumo fo mo ye,  
a ye dimba mala, a ye da  
jonki.  
Molu ka ye ko "muneng ?"  
a ko ye ko "nga kuto le je  
wulo kono."  
A muruta tukang kuto kang  
wulo kono,  
a futata a ma nyameng,  
a ko a be wo ma la nyameng,  
wo y'a pusa, a muruta suo  
kono koteng a boring boring to,  
a ko a bi ta fango le kamma.  
Bari jang ning a be futa la  
kuto ma kotenke,  
a y'a tara wo tata.

Silang dung ali la miro to  
nying keo mu mo firing ne ti  
bang, fo dung ala joteya le  
y'a tinna bang ?

(J.M.Saidy)

THE MAN AND THE MONITOR

A man went into the bush,  
he found a monitor lizard lying (there),  
"whoosh", he returned home  
running.  
As soon as he reached, he did not  
even say a word to anyone,  
(but) lit the fire, and put on the  
pot  
People asked him "What is it ?"  
He replied to them "It is a monitor  
lizard I've seen in the bush."  
He returned again to the lizard  
in the bush,  
as soon as he reached it,  
and was about to touch it,  
it struck him, he returned  
home again running,  
to go and fetch his cutlass.  
But before he reached the  
monitor lizard again,  
it happened that it had gone.

Now then in your opinion,  
was this man just stupid  
or was it his cowardice that  
caused this ?

(D.P.Gamble)

Kibaro- September 1953, p.3

NINSI TIO NING KUNKU TIO

Ke fula le sotota nung,  
do mu ninsi tio le ti,  
do mu kunku tio le ti.  
Ninsi tio ye a la ninso bula,  
ninso tata kunku tio la nyo domo.

Kabiring kunku tio ye nying  
ninso tara ala kunko to,  
a ye ninso fa.  
Ninsi tio nata, a k'a ye ko  
"Mune y'a tinna i ye nna ninso  
fa ?"

Kunku tio k'a ye ko "ila ninso  
ye nna nyo le domo."  
Ninsi tio k'a ye ko,  
"Woto i si nna ninso jo,  
n fanang si ila nyo jo."  
Kunku tio fanang sonta wo la.  
Kunku tio ye ninso jo,  
ninsi tio fanang ye nyo jo.  
I ko bitung ninsi fureo juma le  
nyanta a taa la nying mo fulo  
kono ?

(Alieu B. Jeng)

THE COW OWNER AND THE FARM OWNER

There were once two men,  
one was a cow owner,  
the other was a farm owner.  
the cow owner let his cow out,  
the cow went and ate the farm owner's  
millet.

When the farm owner found this  
cow in his farm,  
he killed the cow.  
The cow owner came, and said to him  
"Why did you kill my cow ?"

The farm owner said to him, "Your  
cow ate my millet."  
The cow owner said to him,  
"Then you should pay for my cow,  
I too should pay for your millet."  
The farm owner agreed to that.  
The farm owner paid for the cow,  
The cow owner paid for the millet.  
They asked then, the dead cow  
who among these two people ought to  
take it ?

(D.P.Gamble)

Kibaro: September 1953, p.3

YIRI TIO NING KULUNG DADALA

Ke do le yiri jang baa soto  
ala suo kono,  
a fulango do be je,  
wo mu juwane dadala le ti,  
Bitung a nying kafunyo nata a ya,  
a k'a ye ko "n lafita i ye la  
nying yiro sang m ma,  
m b'a kela juwano le ti."  
Su tio sonta, a ye yiro sang  
a kafunyo ma.  
Wo le to, yiro sandingo kola,  
a samo, suo tio kafunyo nata  
a ning ala terang baa,  
a ye yiro boi,  
Kabiring a ye nying yiro boi  
nyameng, kataba yiri do falinta  
yiri folo no to.

I ko nying yiri kuto juma le  
taa mu ?

(Alieu B. Jeng)

THE TREE OWNER AND THE CANOE MAKER

A certain man had a very tall tree  
in his compound,  
one of his companions was there,  
he was a canoe-maker.  
Then this age-mate came to him,  
and said to him, "I want you to  
sell this tree to me,  
I am going to make it into a canoe."  
The compound-owner agreed, he sold  
the tree to his age-mate.  
Thereupon, after the sale of the tree,  
the next morning, the compound owner's  
age mate came with his big ax,  
(and) cut down the tree.  
As soon as he had cut down the tree  
immediately another tree sprang up  
in the place of the first tree.

They asked "This new tree, who is  
the owner ?"

(D.P.Gamble)

Kibaro: September/October 1954, pp. 1-2

KEBA KILING

Keba kiling ne be kering nung  
a ye dinke saba soto  
Nying mang na simaya, a fata.  
Kabiring a fata ala keo bee tata  
kanyang Faransi kaiti tang ning  
lulu le fe.

Wo nya leng sate kebalu ye nying  
keba dinke sabo nyininka, i ko ye  
ko "ali fa fata, a mang feng tu  
fo nying faransi kaiti tang ning  
lulu, ali be wo kela mune ti ?"  
Dinkeolu bee koto keba ye  
sate kebalu jabi, a ko ye ko  
"Nying nafulo doyata, bari  
barako b'a bala le."

Koto ke keba nata nafulo tala  
aning a dokolu tema,  
mo o mo ye kaiti lulu soto,  
a ko "ali nnga ta safaro la."  
Kabiring i wulita, sanji saba  
i be safari wulo kono,  
labango la i bee nata beng  
silafata kumbeng saba to  
Koto ke keba nata a fo dokolu ye  
ko "mo o mo si sila kiling ta  
i ye ta safaro la,  
ni meng ye safaro ke,  
i si murunang jang  
i ye na tomalu batu."

Wo nya leng i bee janjanta.  
Koto ke keba bulu tata beng  
sawundango le folo fe,  
a ye sawundango da nyininka,  
sawundang tiyo ko "kaiti lulu."  
Koto ke keba mang feng soto  
fo kaiti lulu dorong,  
a wakilita, a y'a dung  
sawundango kunna.  
Sawundango sandingo kola  
koto ke keba muruta nang  
silafato to.

Kambane do meng sing be koto  
kang, wo y'a la kodo dung ninsi  
fenyo le kunna,  
wo fanang muruta nang silafato  
to.

A BIG MAN

There was once a big man  
who had three sons.  
He did not live to be very old, but died.  
When he died his property all amounted  
to fifteen French notes.

So the elders of the town  
asked the three sons of this man and  
said "Your father has died, but did not  
leave anything but these fifteen French  
notes, what will you do with them ?"  
The eldest of these sons  
replied to the elders of the town, and  
said "This wealth is small, but  
blessings come with it."  
The eldest went and divided the wealth  
between his brothers,  
each received five notes.  
He said "Let us go trading,"  
When they set off, for three years  
they were travelling through the bush,  
finally they all gathered  
at the junction of three paths.  
The eldest brother went on to tell his  
younger brothers "Each person should  
select a path for his journey,  
(and) when you have done the journey,  
you should return here  
and wait for your namesakes ? (brothers).

In that way they all separated.  
The eldest brother happened to find  
a winnowing basket first,  
he asked the price of the basket,  
the owner of the basket said "five notes".  
The eldest brother had not anything  
but five notes,  
he agreed, he paid it for the basket.

After the purchase of the basket  
the eldest brother returned  
to the fork in the road.

The other young man who came after the  
elder brother, he paid for a cow's tail,  
he also returned to the fork in the road.



I bee doko wo y'a la kodo dung  
dungareo le kunna,  
a fanang nata a kotoma nyolu ya  
silafato to.

Nying kambanolu bota banku meng  
to, ila Mansa Keo ye ding musu  
kiling ne soto.

Mansa y'a nying ding muso kanu  
nyameng, mo t'a fo no la.

Kabiring nying dinkeolu bee  
benta i bee koto jututa ila  
safari fengolu la,  
wo le to a ko "nntolu bota su  
nyinang si ke sanji saba,  
adung meng keta nn koma m ma  
long."

Wo le to, koto keba ko a do  
labango ye ko,  
"Ila dungareo nati nga kono  
jube ning keta su m b'a lonna le."

Koto keo ye dungareo kono jube,  
a salamita a ko  
"Mansa ding musu kilingo meng  
b'a bulu fata le,  
adung molu fele bending a kunna."  
Wo kola koto keba nata fo a  
dokolu ye ko "ali i nyalu biti  
ali ye na si nying sawundango  
kono."

I bee sita sawundango kono  
nyameng, fiu sawundango tita i fe,  
kataba kiling i futata i ya.

Fenye tiyo fanang y'a la fenyo  
bondi, a ko molu bee ye ta banta  
fo ate ning mansa ning a kotoma  
nyolu.

Molu bee tata banta,  
a y'a la fenyo taa,  
a ye fureo busa ko sinye fula,  
fureo tisota,  
busa sabanjango fureo wulita.

Mansa ko silang a b'a ding muso  
dila nyilu kiling ne la.  
Altolu y'a mira juma le nyanta  
nying muso soto la nying mo sabo  
kono ?

The youngest of all paid his money  
for a mirror,  
he also came to his elder brothers  
at the fork in the path.

The country these youths came from,  
their King had an only daughter.

How much the King loved this daughter,  
no one could tell it.  
When these sons all met,  
the eldest of all despised the things  
they had obtained on their journey,  
then he said "Since we left home it is  
now three years,  
and so what has happened in our absence  
I don't know."

Thereupon, the eldest said to his  
youngest brother,  
"Bring out your mirror, let us look  
in it, what has happened at home, we  
will know."

The eldest brother looked into the  
mirror, he exclaimed and said  
"The King's only daughter  
has died,  
and look at people gathering around her."  
After that the eldest went on to say  
to his younger brothers "Cover your eyes  
and come and sit in this basket."

As soon as they sat down in the basket,  
whoosh, the basket flew with them,  
and immediately they reached home.

The owner of the tail took out his tail,  
and said everyone should go outside  
except for the King and his elder brothers.

Everyone went outside  
he took his tail,  
he struck the corpse twice,  
the corpse sneezed,  
on the third stroke she rose up.

The King said that now he would  
give his daughter to one of them.  
Which one of these three people do you  
think ought to have this woman ?

(Yahya Jallow)

(D.P.Gamble)

This tale which is listed as AT 653A in Aarne and Thompson's The types of the folktale (1964) is widespread in Africa.

William R. Bascom in African Dilemma Tales (1975) gives thirty-seven examples (36: 1-37).

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A version from Liberia (the ethnic group is not given) is to be found in A. Doris Banks Henries: Liberian Folklore, 1966 , p. 128 ("Which man to marry").

D.P.Gamble: Mandinka Reading Book, 1956, pp. 11-12

The two groundnut farmers

Kambani fula benta ye tiyo  
sene nyo kang.  
I tata tiyo so la kunko to,  
ye tiya so ke fo i batata.  
Kambani do ye tiyo do jani.  
I be siring, i be tiya nyimo la.  
Kambani kilingo ka tiyo teyi,  
a ka fato ke kambani do koto.  
Silang i la musolu nata i jube,  
Musu kiling ko kambani kiling  
ye ko "Ite ka tiyo nyimi bake !"  
A ko muso ye ko,  
"Nte ka tiyo teyi n ka nyimi ;  
nying dong ka tiyo n'a fato le  
kunung."  
Silang nying kambani fulolu  
juma le maluta ?

(Baba Jane)

Two youths joined in working groundnuts  
together.  
They went to dig groundnuts on their farm,  
they dug groundnuts until they were tired.  
One of the youths roasted some groundnuts.  
They were sitting chewing groundnuts.  
One youth would shell the nuts,  
and put the shells beside the other youth.  
Now their wives came to see them.  
One wife said to the youth  
"You eat a lot of groundnuts!"  
He said to the wife,  
"As for me, I shell the nuts to eat them;  
this other eats the nuts with their shells."  
  
Now of these two youths  
which was shamed ?

(D.P.Gamble)

Source: Girls at Kerewan, Lower Baddibu, 1966  
From tape recording.

The version below combines accounts from two girls. The first started with the three people, but omitted one. The second corrected her, but began her account at the point of error, in the middle of the story.

-----

Bulu-jang Sule aning Nya-dima Sule  
aning Tulu-dima Sule. Yoo.  
Silang i be ba kono, i ning findo,  
kulungo kono.

Long-armed Sule, and Keen-eyed Sule  
and Sharp-eared Sule. Yes.  
Now they were on the river, with findo  
(digitaria) in a canoe.

Tulu dima Sule ko: "Findi-keso  
jolonta, n ka moi,ba kono.

Sharp-eared Sule said "A grain of findo  
fell, I heard it, in the river.

Nya-dima Sule a y'a nya yora,  
a ko "a haina laring poto bala."  
("a haina nang bularing poto kono.")  
Bulu jang Sule ko : "Tonya la."  
a y'a muta nang.

Sharp-eyed Sule searched with his eyes and said:  
"There it is lying in the mud."

Long-armed Sule said "It is true,"  
and reached and took it.

M ma long nying mo saba juma le mu  
ke ti ?

I don't know which of these three was the  
(best) man.

(Silang nying mo saba juma le y'a  
dokuo ke ?)

(Now of these three men which did the best  
work ?).

-----

William R. Bascom: African Dilemma Tales, Mouton, 1975.

provides 5 summaries of this tale (One Bambara, two Malinke, and two  
(unidentified) from Sierra Leone ). Four of the versions involve a  
great counter who verifies that a seed is missing. The other version has  
a Long Handed person.

One version is given in Moussa Travélé: Proverbes et Contes Bambara, 1923,  
p.91-2(Trois Hommes Capables).

Kibaro: September 1952, p.2

A NUMERICAL PUZZLE

Fa kiling ne sotata,  
a ye dinke nani wulu.  
A dinke keba ye musu kononto futu.  
Musu folo ye ding kiling wulu,  
musu fulanjango ye ding fula wulu,  
  
musu sabanjango ye ding saba wulu,  
musu naninjango ye ding nani wulu,  
musu lulunjango ye ding lulu wulu,  
musu woronjango ye ding woro wulu,  
  
musu worowulanjango ye ding woro-  
wula wulu,  
musu seinjango ye ding sei wulu,  
  
musu konontonjango ye ding  
kononto wulu.  
I mumeo keta ding tang nani ning  
ding lulu.

Kabiring ala ke tala sita,  
a do keolu ko i lafita fo i  
si ding tang nano ning ding  
lulolu fanang tala i tema,  
adung i be o be si kanyang.  
Bitung a do ke sabo lota.  
Koto keo ye ding ke folo ta,  
a ning lulunjango, a ning  
konontonjango, wo keta ko,  
tang ning lulu.  
Do ke do ye fulo ta, a ning  
woronjango, a ning worowulanjango,  
wo fana keta ko, tang ning lulu.  
Do ke labango fanang ye sabo ta,  
a ning nano ning seinjango.  
wo fana keta ko tang ning lulu.

Bitung tukung fanang a nying  
doma sabo ye dingolu men'nu  
tala teng, i bama nyolu fututa i  
ye.  
Kiling ye musu saba le soto.

N jikita ko nying keo tala ku ta  
le.

(Sefo Karamo Kabba Sane)  
of Kayaf, E. Kiang

There was once a father,  
he had given birth to four sons.  
His eldest son had married nine wives.  
The first wife had given birth to one child.  
The second wife had given birth to two  
children.  
The third wife had given birth to three  
children,  
the fourth wife had given birth to four  
children,  
the fifth wife had given birth to five  
children,  
the sixth wife had given birth to six  
children,  
the seventh wife had given birth to seven  
children,  
the eighth wife had given birth to eight  
children,  
the ninth wife had given birth to nine  
children.  
The total came to forty-five children.

When the division of inheritance time came,  
his younger brothers said they  
should divide the forty five children  
among them also,  
and they all should be divided equally.  
Then the three younger brothers stood up.  
The elder brother took the first's children,  
and the fifth's, and the  
ninth's, that amounted to  
fifteen.  
Another younger brother took the second's  
children, and the sixth's, and the seventh's,  
that also came to fifteen.  
The last younger brother took the third's  
children, and the fourth's, and the eighth's,  
that also amounted to fifteen.

Then again also these  
three younger brothers, the mothers  
of the children they had divided thus,  
married them.  
Each got three wives.

I hope that this inheritance was fairly  
divided.

(D.P. Gamble)

Kibaro: March 1953, p.4

A NUMERICAL PUZZLE

Wuyawuya kononto lota  
soto bulu kononto kang,  
i ye kononto domo,  
i ye kononto samba,  
i ding kononto ma,  
hu kononto kono,  
nying wuyawuya bee kafo  
mu jelu le ti ?

Nine starlings stood  
on nine fig tree branches  
they ate nine,  
they carried off nine  
to each of their nine children,  
in nine holes.  
altogether how many starlings  
were there ?

(Answer not given)

Kibaro: May 1951, p. 3 (Republished: March 1953, p. 4 & December 1953, p.4)

KUMA KOTOMA <sup>1</sup>

PROVERBS (OLD SAYINGS)

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Sulo ko a fata bantaba to<br>duto la, a y'a tara a sotonya<br>le t'a ye.   | The monkey says he does not want the<br>mango from the village meeting place,<br>it means he has no way of getting it.  |
| Wo le mu nyinti, i lafita fen<br>na, i t'a soto no la, i s'a<br>fo ko "a mang beteya."  | The explanation is this. You want<br>something, but cannot get it, so you<br>say "it is no good."   |
| 2. Kungo si men no, nya y'a lon<br>ne.  | What the head is capable (of carrying)<br>the eyes know.  |
| 3. Kunu-kantala, a buka a ya je.  | The bird watcher does not see close<br>to home. (i.e. People in glass houses<br>should not throw stones)  |
| 4. Kunku muta n da la, aning<br>doku la mang kiling.  | To talk about making a farm, and<br>actually doing the work are not the same.   |
| 5. I namanang kelo balang, i si<br>sonko balang.  | Before you refuse war, you should refuse<br>a quarrel.  |
| 6. Wulo meng ka mo ngon-ngong,<br>a buka mo king, bari wulo<br>meng lafita i king na,<br>a ka tambi i noma,<br>f'a si i king. | A dog which barks at people,<br>does not bite, but the dog<br>that wants to bite you,<br>it goes round behind you,<br>in order to bite you.                     |
| 7. Sula fenyo si jangaya o<br>jangaya, ni i y'a nyopoti,<br>a s'a dimi.   | However long a monkey's tail,<br>if you pinch it,<br>it will hurt him.  |
| Wo le mu nyinti:<br>Mo ning a badingo kuyata<br>nya o nya, ni i ye ku jau k'a<br>la, a s'a kamfa.                             | The explanation is this:<br>However much a person and his relative<br>are at odds, if you do a bad thing to<br>him (the relative), the person will be<br>angry. |
| 8 Sibi jang dubengo.  | The tall rhun palm's shade.   |
| Wo le mu nyinti:<br>Mo meng buka ku beto ke a<br>badingolu ye, fo mo kotennu<br>ye.   | The explanation is this:<br>A person who does not do good things<br>for his relatives, but for other people.  |

(Collected by D.P.Gamble)

(D.P.Gamble)

- 1 I think these items represented a revision of material  
found in Knott, A.J.: Kumolu aning Talingolu. Mandinka Stories  
and Proverbs, Collected and Translated by A.J. Knott.

Bathurst, 1938. 68 pp. Bound typescript. A copy is to be  
found in the National Archives, Banjul. (DPG. Mar.80).

These were well known sayings among the Mandinka.

D.P.Gamble: Mandinka Reading Book, 1956, pp. 8-9

PROVERBS  
(From the Kombo)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Podongo si me santo nya-o-nya, a te jambo ke no la je.  | However long a stick is in the air, it cannot bring forth leaves there.  |
| 2. Yiri kunto si me ba kono nya-o-nya, a te ke la bambo ti.  | However long a log is in the river, it will not become a crocodile.  |
| 3. Soso kana nyo fa, nyo kana soso fa.   | Let not beans kill millet, let not millet kill beans. (Both can be planted on the same farm - Live and let live)   |
| 4. Muro buka a kungo li no.  | A knife cannot shave its own head.   |
| 5. Patapare kiling be kongolu kono.  | A red monkey is among the baboons. (A person who is out of place).   |
| 6. Mo s'a fo Alla ye, i be kaira to ?  | Shall a person ask God, are you at peace ?   |
| 7. Dukuti le ka dakati bondi   | Dukuti brings forth dakati (If you expect to receive something, you must give something first).  |
| 8. Sulu tambita, ninsiringo kumbota.<br>(Ni i dunta dula to, feng filita je, molu si i sobi la).   | The wolf passed, the calf cried.<br><br>(If you entered a place, something was missing there, people will suspect you).  |
| 9. Ni santo kerengo ye bambo la kundimo long, juma le y'a f'a ye ? Kana.   | If the squirrel knows of the crocodile's headache, who told him ?<br>The iguana (which goes both on land and in the water).  |
| 10. Tiyo ning kerengo la teriya.<br>(Kerengo ka fo nga ta tiya ya, tiya buka fo nga ta kerengo ya).  | The friendship of groundnuts and squirrels. (The squirrel says "Let us go to the groundnuts," the groundnuts do not say "Let us go to the squirrel.")<br>-A friendship where the advantage is all to one side. |
| 11. Yiri do ning fantango mulunta, bari i domo-nyalu mang kiling.<br>(From Baddibu)<br>(Fantango is the name of a fish. Its scales are like the bark of a certain tree). | A certain tree and 'fantango' resemble one another, but their eating is different.   |



Collected by D.P.Gamble

PROVERBS

(From various districts)

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Nana buka boi banko to<br>kensenke. (Jokadu)  | The swallow does not come down to<br>the ground for nothing.   |
| 2. Yiri dima, hani n'a selo<br>kuyata, ka fending jolong.<br>(Baddibu)                                 | A sweet tree (fruit tree) even if<br>climbing it is difficult, lets<br>something fall.                               |
| 3. Dolo-bato koto, a buka<br>a sunkango bo.<br>(I si jio ke je nya-o-nya,<br>a si sunkang). (Baddibu). | An old palm wine calabash does not<br>lose its smell.<br>(No matter how much water you put<br>there, it will stink). |
| 4. Kacha meringo ka larang koto<br>fengo bondi. (Kombo)  | A long chat brings out the thing<br>hidden under the bed.  |
| 5. I ye suo siti, i mang nyo di<br>a la. (Kombo)   | You've tied up the horse, but you'<br>ve not given it any millet.  |
| 6. Timbingo - podong buka a<br>jolong, fo ni i y'a kati i<br>bulo la. (Kiang)                          | Timbingo, a (thrown) stick does not<br>knock it down, you must break it with<br>your own hand.                       |
| 7. I bulo kono nyeo, kana a<br>bula i sing koto nyeo ye.<br>(Niani)                                    | Don't leave the fish in your hand<br>for the fish under your foot.   |
| 8. Kumo kuntu ka kelo tariya.  | Abrupt talk (talk cut short) hastens<br>fighting.  |
| 9. Mo buka fo bambo ye tuneng.   | A person does not tell a crocodile to<br>dive.   |

Collected by D.P.Gamble

PROVERBS

(From the Upper River)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Ninso ni kantala t'a noma,<br>a si fili.                  | A cow, if the herdsman is not behind<br>it, will become lost.                 |
| 2. Nyankumo la kullio, nyino<br>buka kuro tala je.           | At the cat's naming ceremony, the mouse<br>does not share out the kola there. |
| 3. Kunku wulo la fero, nyankaro<br>y'a long.                 | The wild dog's cunning, the crab<br>knows it                                  |
| 4. Buro ning kamindo keta tanyo<br>ti.                       | The duck and the crane (?) have become<br>companions.                         |
| 5. Tubabo ning tubanyo mang<br>kiling.                       | 'European' and 'maize' are not the same.                                      |
| 6. Mem be larango to, wo le ye<br>dabolu long je.            | Whoever is on the bed,<br>knows the bed-bugs there.                           |
| 7. Tonso nte subo ti.  | A bat is not meat.  |
| 8. Ni luntango meta kolongo to,<br>julu tiyo b'a tara la je. | If a stranger stays long at the well,<br>a rope owner is bound to find him.   |
| 9. Kuta fula wo le ye nyo king<br>dula long.                 | Two tortoises know where to bite one<br>another.                              |
| 10. Ni kalero ko neno le b'a la,<br>jibida s'a fo nyadi ?    | If the cooking pot complains of cold,<br>what shall the water pot say ?       |
| 11. I nenemang yeo so, i be jio<br>le folo so la.            | Before you pierce the fish, you will<br>pierce the water first.               |
| 12. Fankanta mang jauwiya                                    | Self-protection (foresight) is not bad.                                       |
| 13. Tonya buka teriya tinya.                                 | The truth does not spoil friendship.  |
| 14. Ni i y'a moi 'hung, hung',<br>a sunkanta le.             | If you hear 'hung, hung', it stinks.  |

Collected by David P. Gamble

PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

From A.K.Rahman ca. 1948

1. Bi namunang folo,  
kunung ne folota.  
  
(I si mira kunung na)  
  
Before today happened,  
yesterday happened.  
  
(You should think of yesterday)
2. I si kiang long nya-o-nya,  
jang kiang ne y'a long ite ti.  
  
(I si sateo long nya-o-nya,  
sate dingo le y'a long ite ti.)  
  
However much you know Kiang,  
the people there know it more than you.  
  
(However well you know a village,  
one born there knows it better than you.)
3. Ning sango ye kukuo tombong,  
a nyanta jobo jai la.  
  
(Ning i ye kaira soto sateo to,  
i nyanta i jiati jai la.)  
  
If the hare picks up kukuo fruit,  
it ought to thank the parrot.  
  
(If you have good fortune in a town,  
you ought to praise your host.)
4. Ninsi koto buka nyamo tinya.  
  
(Keba mang nyang ku kurungo ke  
la)  
  
An old cow does not spoil the grass.  
  
(An old man ought not to perform a bad action).
5. Kantarla ye a la bolo mabo dameng,  
a buka doko fai je.  
  
(Mo te a fansung fengo tinya la).  
  
Where the herdsman has put away his  
gourd, he does not throw a stick in that  
direction.  
  
(A person will not destroy his own property).
6. Talibo mang fode kuwo long,  
bari fodeo ye talibe kuwo long.  
  
(Dindingo mang keba la fero long,  
bari keba ye dindingo la fero  
long, katuko a folota dindingya  
le to).  
  
A pupil does not know what the teacher does,  
but a teacher knows what the student does.  
  
(A child does not know an elder's plans,  
but an elder knows a child's intentions,  
because he was first a child).



Source: Kibaro, September 1952, p.4

MANSALOLU

1. Bulu kono kunu kilingo, ate le  
fisayata jamfajang kunu tango ti.
2. Londo soto mu nafulo le ti,  
londi soto-baliya mu koro le ti.  
Bari londi-barakantango fanang  
mulung ne ko montoro buluntango.
3. Kuro ke ning tilo be boring.  
(kuo ke a tumo le.)

PROVERBS

- A single bird in the hand, that  
is better than ten birds far off.
- Obtaining knowledge is a benefit,  
Lack of knowledge is a trouble.  
But knowledge which is not blessed  
is like a watch without hands.
- Do your washing when the sun is rising.  
(coming out). (Do things at the right time).

J. M. Saidy

Translated by D.P.Gamble

Kibaro: December 1950, p.3 : Submitted by David P. Gamble

MANSALOLU

RIDDLES

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. A. Mansali, mansali<br>B. Mansali dima.  | (The introductory phrases when<br>a riddle session begins)  |
| 2. A. Mini mini fo mini fo ?<br>B. Ninsi finta, bari a nono<br>koita.   | (No translation)<br>The cow is black, but its milk<br>is white.   |
| 3. A. Chorok chondong ?<br>B. Bendang bulata bara kono.   | (No translation)<br>A needle is lost in the long grass.   |
| 4. A. Kirikap ?<br>B. Sama nyoita bere kang.  | (No translation)<br>An elephant knelt on a rock.  |
| 5. A. Ntondokulondong ?<br>B. Nyankumo, a nengo si<br>jangaya nyo-o-nya, a te<br>bolo kono newung no la.  | (No translation)<br>A cat, however long its tongue,<br>cannot lick inside a (bottle-<br>shaped) gourd.  |
| 6. A. Basa ba kobali ?<br>B. Banko.   | The big mat without a back.<br>The ground.  |
| 7. A. Kwiam ba ninintang ?<br>B. Sango.   | The big shed (covering) which<br>does not give shade ?<br>The sky.  |
| 8. A. Kotondi fe ba bobali ?<br>B. Lolo.  | The big cotton field which cannot<br>be picked ?<br>The stars.  |
| 9. A. Suto kono fandi fing<br>tombombalo ?<br>B. Bida.  | The black strip (of cloth) in the<br>bush which cannot be picked up.<br>A (black) snake.  |
| 10. A. Suto kono duntunding nya<br>wuleng ?<br>B. Teng kulo.  | The little cock in the bush with red<br>eyes.<br>Palm kernel.   |
| 11. A. N tata Njai ya,<br>m mang Njai tara je,<br>Njai la wulo ye n king ?<br>B. Ni i tata tomborong tombong,<br>ni i mang tomborongo tara je,<br>tomborong nganingo ye i so. | I went to Njai's place,<br>I did not find Njai there,<br>Njai's dog bit me ?<br>When you go to pick tomborong (fruit),<br>you do not find any tomborong there,<br>but the tomborong thorns prick you. |

Kibaro: May 1951, p. 2. (Republished: December 1953, p.4) -David P. Gamble

MANSALOLU

RIDDLES

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. A. Nyinkinki nyankanka ?  | (No translation)  |
| B. Konoma fula te nyo bambu no la.   | Two pregnant women cannot carry each other on their backs.  |
| 2. A. Kitiri katara nombo ?  | (No translation)  |
| B. Mo ning samato te sele no la santo.   | A person cannot climb up (a tree) with sandals on.  |
| 3. A. Kolonda <sup>1</sup> la ke koi ?   | The well mouth's white husband ?  |
| B. Mirang koyo.  | A white calabash.   |
| 4. A. Kolonda la ke fing ?   | The well mouth's black husband ?  |
| B. Kunango.  | A wooden bowl (usually dark in color)   |
| 5. A. Kolonda la ke wuleng ?   | The well's red husband ?  |
| B. Dumbo.  | Water jar (a red clay pot).   |
| 6. A. N tata m bitang-kunda to, i ye baso fene n ye, dinding nya kandi ye n sabang a kang. | I went to my in-laws place, they spread a mat for me, a hasty child sat on it before me.                |
| B. Sio.  | A fly.  |
| 7. A. Sing nani lota sing nani kang, a be sing nani batu la ?                              | Four legs stood on four legs, waiting for four legs ?   |
| B. Nyankumo lota tabulo kang, a be nyina bato la <sup>2</sup>                              | A cat on a table, waiting for a mouse.  |
| 8. A. Nga nna ninso siti bungo kono, a binolu be banta ?                                   | I tied my cow in the house, its horns are outside ?   |
| B. Dimba ning sisio.   | Fire and smoke. (Smoke comes through the house thatched roof).  |
| 9. A. Tili jelu be duniya kono ?   | How many days are there in the world ?  |
| B. Tili saba, kunung tambita, m be bi kono, soma je na.                                    | Three days ; yesterday has passed, we are in today, tomorrow is coming.                                 |
| 10. A. Fen neng, m borita, m borita, m ma muta no. N nata, n jonkotota, nga a muta.        | There is something, I ran and ran, and did not catch it. I came back, and squatted down, and caught it. |
| B. N niniyo.   | My shadow.  |
| 11. A. Fen neng bul't'a la, sing t'a la, a ka jambu yerenke.                               | There is something, it has no arms, it has no legs, but it makes little (millet) balls.                 |
| B. Pakaya.   | Pawpaw (the seeds of which resemble little granules of millet flour).                                   |

1. Kolonda: area around the mouth of a well.

2. This riddle was used a great deal by George O'Halloran, and was perhaps introduced by him.

Kibaro: September 1953, p.3

DIYABUGU KIBARO

Ke kiling ne sotota nung,  
a ka duniya kuolu nyininka bake.

Fo lung kiling a ning keba  
kiling benta silo kang, a y'a  
nyininka nying ku lulu n na

1. Mung feng ne ye dimba no ?  
"Jio" keba y'a jabi wo le la.

2. Mung feng ne ye jio no ?  
"Fonyo".

3. Mung feng ne dung ye fonyo no ?  
"Mo."

4. Mung feng ne dung ye mo no ?  
"Hamo".

5. Silang dung mung feng ne ye  
hamo dung no ?  
"Saya".

(Dodou K. N'Jie)

NEWS FROM DIYABUGU

There was once a man,  
He used to ask questions all the time  
about matters in the world.  
Finally one day he and an old man met  
on the road, he asked him  
these five questions.

What thing is stronger than fire ?  
"Water" the old man replied to that.

What thing is stronger than water ?  
"The wind."

What thing then is stronger than the  
wind ?  
"A person."

What is stronger than a person ?  
"Desire".

Now then what thing is stronger  
than desire ?  
"Death".

(D.P.Gamble)



Collected by David P. Gamble in Kiang

MANSALOLU

1. A. fen(g) neng, a kungo firing  
a tata ala Mari Alla ya  
debero la.  
B. tengo / sibi-karango.
2. A. fen(g) neng,  
a k'a be ala Mari Alla  
junku la.  
B. kuda.
3. A. fen(g) neng, a ye da yele,  
a ka a be Mari Alla  
kunung.  
B. kulungo.
4. A. fen(g) neng,  
bul't'a la, sin(g) t'a la,  
a ka dinka sing.  
B. sumuna.
5. A. kuring kese batanding fa.  
B. nying keso.
6. A. mo fulo be bung kiling kono,  
i buka nyo je.  
B. berekilo.
7. A. nga na duntunding ne sareng,  
sanji saba, ni nga wura,  
a kokoleta.  
B. talango.
8. A. nga na turaring ne fa,  
sanji saba, ni n tata je,  
wati-o-wati n si a no tara  
je.  
B. kembo.
9. A. fulanding keme,  
kurutu julu kiling.  
B. fitarango.
10. A. sunkutu keme,  
joni julu kiling,  
B. fitarango.

RIDDLES

- there is something, with loosened hair,  
it went to God's place  
to have its hair done.  
palm tree/ rhun palm leaves
- there is something  
it looked as if it was about to strike  
God.  
pestle (which is raised upwards with each  
stroke)
- there is something, it has opened its  
mouth, it is about to swallow God.  
  
mortar. (the open top of which faces  
skyward).
- there is something,  
it has no arms, it has no legs,  
but it digs holes.  
urine.
- a little calabash full of cowries  
a mouth full of teeth
- two people are in one house,  
they don't see each other.  
testicles.
- I buried my little cock,  
if I dug it up after three years,  
it still crows.  
a bell.
- I slaughtered my little bull,  
three years after, if I went there,  
always I should find its traces there.  
  
charcoal.
- a hundred age mates (twins)  
one trouser cord.  
a broom.
- a hundred little girls  
a single strand of waist beads.  
a broom.

Collected by David P. Gamble.

MANSALOLU

11. A. lembere meseng larija  
B. yiro si jangaya nya-o-nya,  
baso si sele a santo.
12. A. n tinkin ne bung tankan ti,  
bar' n tankan ne bung tinkin  
ti.  
B. sita sungo le ye bung njeng  
sungo , bari njendingo le  
ye bung sita dingo ti.
13. A. ntimining bos  
B. siseo, y'a long ko nying t'a  
da kono, bari a la buo ka  
nunku le.
14. A. yirinding be fafa la jonkongo  
to, a la baalu buka domo,  
fo wandi baa.  
B. barimuso s'a baringkeo  
futu no la ?
15. A. basa-balo, wo mu munne ti ?  
B. tongo, ni i ye laa,  
a buka futa baso to.
16. A. kurto janita,  
kurtu julo mang jani.  
B. nyamo janita,  
silo mang jani.
17. A. n tata luntang ya dula  
nga kontondiro ke,  
kendo man n jo, fo fureo.  
B. jamba jaro ning jamba  
kitingo.
18. A. keba be bungo kono,  
a bora be banta.  
B. dimba ning sisio.

RIDDLES

- (no translation)  
however tall a tree  
a lizard can climb up it.
- ntinkin is more than ntankan,  
but ntankan is more than ntinkin.  
a baobab tree is larger than a pumpkin  
stem, but a pumpkin is larger than  
baobab fruit.
- (no translation)  
fowl, you know that there are no  
teeth in its mouth, but its excrement  
is soft.
- a little tree is in father's back yard,  
his goats don't eat it, only some one  
else's goat.  
can a sister marry her brother ?
- lacking-the-mat, what is that ?  
the nape of your neck, when you lie down,  
it does not touch the mat.
- the trousers burnt,  
the trouser belt did not burn.  
the grass burnt,  
the path did not burn.
- I went to a stranger's place,  
I greeted (them)  
the living did not reply, only the dead.  
dry leaves and fresh leaves.  
(fresh leaves make no sound when you walk  
on them, only the dry leaves).
- the old man is in the house,  
his beard is outside.  
fire and smoke.

Recorded in San Francisco, April 1977 from Keba Fati (M) of Busumbala, Kombo.

KEBA SABA

Keba saba le mu,  
kilingo ko "Nte la julo buka  
tu mo la",  
kilingo ko "Nte buka mo la julo jo."  
Nying keba do ko  
"Ku buka tinya nte nya la."

Meng buka mo la julo jo,  
a tata menna julo buka tu mo la,  
a tata a kontong.  
Kabiring a futata je,  
a k'a ye ko "N nata i kontong."  
Meng buka mo la julo jo,  
a k'a ye "N donto kodo la."  
A k'a ye ko "Hn, nna julo buka tu  
mo la."  
A k'a ye "Bari nte fanang buka mo  
la julo jo."  
(A ye donto kodo la)

Ku buka tinya n nya la, a k'a ye ko  
"A di a la dorong,  
ku buka tinya nte nya la."  
A ko "Ha. Nna julo buka tu mo la."  
(A k'a ye) "Nte buka mo la julo jo."

Awa, a ye julo di a la.  
A tata julo kaning, baring  
(a k'a ye) "M ma fo i ye,  
nte buka mo la julo jo ko !"  
A k'a ye "Bari nte fanang la  
julo buka tu mo la ko !"  
Janning ku buka tinya n nya be na  
la je, ye kelo ke,  
Nna julo buka tu mo la  
(ye ku buka tinya a nya la), a y'a fa  
(Error for 'I-don't- pay debts' )

Ku buka tinya n nya la,  
biring a futata je, -  
a borita, a tata je,  
I k'a ye "Hn, ila molu be kele la  
ko !"  
A ko "munne mu ?"  
"Nga fo i ye ko nte la julo buka tu  
mo la.  
Ate k'a ye "Nte buka mo la julo jo."  
An a be kele la wo la.

THREE MEN

There were three men,  
one said "No one ever owes me a debt"  
one said "I do not pay any debt."  
This other man said  
"Nothing goes wrong in my presence."

The one that did not pay debts,  
he went to the one nobody ever owes,  
he went and greeted him.  
When he reached there,  
he said "I have come to greet you."  
The one that did not pay debts,  
said to him "Lend me money."  
He replied "Hn, no one ever owes me."

He said to him "But I also do not pay debts."  
(He lent him money) *Said in error.*

Nothing goes wrong in my presence said to him  
"Just give it to him,  
Nothing goes wrong in my presence."  
He said "Yes, but no one ever owes me."  
(The other said) "But I do not pay debts."

Anyway, he gave him the money.  
He went to collect the debt, but  
he was told "Didn't I tell you,  
I don't pay debts."  
He said to him "But I too  
no one ever owes me."  
Before Nothing-goes-wrong-in-my presence  
reached there, they fought.  
No-one-owes-me-money ,  
killed (Nothing-goes-wrong-in-my-presence)

Nothing goes wrong in my presence,  
when he reached there -  
he ran and went there.  
They said to him "Your people are fighting."  
He asked "What is the matter ?"  
"Didn't I tell you that no one ever owes  
me money."  
He said "I never pay a debt."  
We were fighting over that.

A ko a ye "He, nying te kele si la.  
 Nte nga f'a ye  
 'Ku buka tinya n nya la.'  
 Ni ali ye batu hanifo n fang  
 futata je, nying te ke la,

kele te ke la je, parce que  
 m be kuo bee dada la,  
 ate be julo jo la,  
 ite la julo te tu mo la,  
 kelo be bang na."

Juma le bolota ?

He told him "Hey, this is not worth a fight.  
 I told him  
 'Nothing goes wrong in my presence.'  
 If you had waited until I myself  
 had reached there, this would not have  
 happened,  
 there would have been no fight, because  
 I would have arranged everything,  
 he would have paid his debt,  
 no one would have been owing you,  
 The quarrel would have been over."

Who was right ?

Story taken down in English by Aisha Khan from Keba Fati (M - 35) from Busumbala, Kombo in San Francisco, April (?) 1977

"Three people cannot be your friend - only two can be good friends. Girl lives in Brikama. Her boyfriend from Busumbala, and other boyfriend from Kunkujang. All meet her in Brikama during the rainy season at night. Very dangerous, wild animals in bush - lion, tigers (1), snakes, thunder, but forget it to meet her. Both say, "Let's go to the movie." When she comes outside of the house, there is an orange tree, the little bird was standing on that tree. He calls her. Say "Well, you gonna go to the movie ?" She say "Yes." And then the little bird said, "If you go to the movie, your friend from Busumbala, he will die. But if you want your friend survive, he not gonna die, then don't go to the movie. But your other friend from Kunkujang, then he will die, but if you don't go to the movie, he won't die." She have to decide because they both standing there - it's hard to decide in front of both. What she do ? She kill herself.

(In either decision, one is a fool).

(1) Leopards, I suppose.