MANDINKA DILEMMA STORIES, PUZZLES, RIDDLES,

AND PROVERBS

(Mandinka texts and translations)

By

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Gambian Studies
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     28 pp.
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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 ñ is used now.
    ng " " "  nj " " "
    ch " " "  c " " "

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


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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 "tna 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 tna 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 dinya 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.
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 tukung 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.

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.

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

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

(J.M.Saidy) (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)
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 lafit a 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)
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,
sawundango 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.
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.


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").
The two groundnut farmers

Kambani fula benta ye tiyo
sene nyō kango.
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 ;
yning dong ka tiyo n'a fato le
kunung."
Silang nying kambani fulolu
juma le maluta ?

(Tapa Jane) (D.P.Gamble)

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 ?
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.

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

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.

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

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

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

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

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.

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

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


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 sef wulu,
musu konontonjango ye ding kononto wulu.
I mumeo keta ding tang nani ning
ding lulu.

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.

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.

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,
made them.
Each got three wives.

N jikita ko nying keo tala ku ta
le.

I hope that this inheritance was fairly
divided.

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

(D.P. Gamble)
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)
1. Sulo ko a fata bantaba to duto la, a y'a tara a sotonya le t'a ye. The monkey says he does not want the mango from the village meeting place, it means he has no way of getting it.

Wo le mu nyinti, i lafita fen na, i t'a soto no la, i s'a fo ko "a mang beteya." The explanation is this. You want something, but cannot get it, so you say "it is no good."

2. Kungo si men no, nya y'a lon ne. What the head is capable (of carrying) the eyes know.

3. Kunu-kantala, a buka a ya je. The bird watcher does not see close to home. (i.e. People in glass houses should not throw stones)

4. Kunku muta n da la, aning doku la mang kiling. To talk about making a farm, and actually doing the work are not the same.

5. I namanang keko balang, i si sonko balang. Before you refuse war, you should refuse a quarrel.

6. Wulo meng ka mo ngon-ngong, a buka mo king, barì wulo meng lafita i king na, a ka tambi i noma, f'a si i king. A dog which barks at people, does not bite, but the dog that wants to bite you, it goes round behind you, in order to bite you.

7. Sula feny o si jangaya o jangaya, ni i y'a nyopoti, a s'a dimi. However long a monkey's tail, if you pinch it, it will hurt him. Wo le mu nyinti: Mo ning a badingo kuyata nya o nya, ni i ye ku jau k'a la, a s'a kamfa. The explanation is this: However much a person and his relative are at odds, if you do a bad thing to him (the relative), the person will be angry.

8. Sibi jang dubengo. The tall rhun palm's shade. Wo le mu nyinti: Mo meng buka ku beto ke a badingolou ye, fo mo kotennu ye. The explanation is this: A person who does not do good things for his relatives, but for other people.

(Collected by D.P.Gamble) (D.P.Gamble)

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.
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)


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. The wolf passed, the calf cried.
(Ni i dunta dula to, feng filita je, molu si i sobi la). (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 ?
The iguana (which goes both on land and in the water).

10. Tiyo ning kerengo la teriya. 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.")
(Kerengo ka fo nga ta tiya ya, tiya buka fo nga ta kerengo ya). -A friendship where the advantage is all to one side.

11. Yiri do ning fantango mulunta, A certain tree and 'fantango' resemble bari i domo-nyalu mang kiling. one another, but their eating is different. (From Baddibu) (Fantango is the name of a fish. Its scales are like the bark of a certain tree).
Collected by D.P. Gamble

PROVERBS
(From various districts)

1. Nana buka boi banko to kensenke. (Jokadu) The swallow does not come down to the ground for nothing.

2. Yiri dima, hani n'a selo kuyata, ka fending jolong. (Baddibu) A sweet tree (fruit tree) even if climbing it is difficult, let something fall.

3. Dolo-bato koto, a buka a sunkango bo. (I si jio ke je nya-o-nya, a si sunkang). (Baddibu) An old palm wine calabash does not lose its smell. (No matter how much water you put there, it will stink).

4. Kacha meringo ka larang koto fengo bondi. (Kombo) A long chat brings out the thing hidden under the bed.

5. I ye suo siti, i mang nyo di a la. (Kombo) You've tied up the horse, but you've not given it any millet.

6. Timbingo - podong buka a jolong, fo ni i y'a katì i bulo la. (Kiang) Timbingo, a (thrown) stick does not knock it down, you must break it with your own hand.

7. I bulo kono nyeo, kana a bula i sing koto nyeo ye. (Niani) Don't leave the fish in your hand for the fish under your foot.


9. Mo buka fo bambo ye tuneng. A person does not tell a crocodile to dive.
1. Ninso ni kantala t'a noma, a si fili.  A cow, if the herdsman is not behind it, will become lost.

2. Nyankumo la kullio, nyino buka kuro tala je.  At the cat's naming ceremony, the mouse does not share out the kola there.

3. Kunku wulo la fero, nyankaro y'a long.  The wild dog's cunning, the crab knows it.

4. Buro ning kamindo keta tanyo ti.  The duck and the crane (?) have become companions.

5. Tubabo ning tubanyo mang kiling.  'European' and 'maize' are not the same.

6. Mem be larango to, wo le ye dabolu long je.  Whoever is on the bed, knows the bed-bugs there.

7. Tonso nte subo ti.  A bat is not meat.

8. Ni luntango meta kolongo to, julu tiyo b'a tara la je.  If a stranger stays long at the well, a rope owner is bound to find him.

9. Kuta fula wo le ye nyo king dula long.  Two tortoises know where to bite one another.

10. Ni kalero ko neno le b'a la, jibida s'a fo nyadi ?  If the cooking pot complains of cold, what shall the water pot say ?

11. I nenemang yeo so, i be jio le folo so la.  Before you pierce the fish, you will 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', a sunkanta le.  If you hear 'hung, hung', it stinks.
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 kuku o tombong, a nyanta jobo jai la. (Ning i ye kaira soto sateo to, i nyanta i jiat jai la.) If the hare picks up kuku 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, Where the herdsman has put away his a buka doko fai je. gourd, he does not throw a stick in that direction. (Mo te a fansung fengo tinya la). (A person will not destroy his own property).

6. Talibo mang fode kuwo long, A pupil does not know what the teacher does, bari fodeo ye talibe kuwo long. but a teacher knows what the student does. (Dindingo mang keba la fero long, (A child does not know an elder's plans, bari keba ye dindingo la fero but an elder knows a child's intentions, long, katuko a folota dindingya because he was first a child). le to).
PROVERBS AND SAYINGS

From Kerewan, Lower Baddibu (1948)

1. Sise-kilo ning bero te taki nyo ti,
   selingo ning pura te kele nyo ti.
   An egg cannot clash with a stone,
   a pigeon cannot fight with a hawk.

2. I namuna i la siseo fa,
   i si i la luntango dajiko nyininka.
   Before you kill your fowl,
   you should ask your guest's habits.
   (Look before you leap)

3. I namunang jiya ba-bung ti ya,
   i si ji ba-fa la ya.
   Rather than lodge with the possessor of a goat-house, you should lodge with one who kills goats. (i.e. a generous person is to be preferred to one who hoards his riches)

4. Keba sito ka damento je,
   dindingo loto, wo t'a je no la mume.
   Where an old man sitting down can see,
   a young person standing up cannot see at all. (i.e. the value of experience)

5. Ye i la mo meng bampu,
   biring somanda la,
   fo tilo be na boi la,
   i ko i b'a kuruntu la.
   The person you carried on your back from morning,
   until the sun was about to set,
   now you want to drag him (on the ground).
   (Don't abandon a person you have started to help. Don't throw away a good reputation needlessly)

From various places:

6. Falo buka wulu jama kono.
   (Kerewan, Baddibu)
   A donkey does not give birth in public.
   (A gift, or information, will not be produced so long as there is a crowd around).

7. Kankurango si kori nya-o-nya,
   a si jamba katila batu.
   (The kankurang is a masked figure clothed in leaves and bark representing a spirit)
   In however great a hurry the kankurang may be, he must wait for the leaf cutters.

8. I be tungo kang,
   i be banko tonyi la.
   You are standing on an ant-hill,
   and abusing the ground.

9. I kumbota da-taurango to.
   (Said when the person had no intention of granting a request)
   You are crying at a locked door.

10. Famo fisayata saya ti.
    (Said in reply to "I famata jang!" - you were a long time away)
    Long absence (Longing) is better than death.
    (Keneba, W.Kiang)
Source: Kibaro, September 1952, p.4

MANSALOLU

1. Bulu kono kunu kilingo, ate le fisayata jamfajang kunu tango ti. A single bird in the hand, that is better than ten birds far off.

2. Londo soto mu nafulo le ti, londi soto-baliya mu koro le ti. Bari londi-barakantango fanang mulung ne ko montoro buluntango. Obtaining knowledge is a benefit, Lack of knowledge is a trouble. But knowledge which is not blessed is like a watch without hands.

3. Kuro ke ning tilo be boring. (kuo ke a tumo le.) Do your washing when the sun is rising. (coming out). (Do things at the right time).

PROVERBS

J. M. Saidy Translated by D.P. Gamble
MANSALOLU

1. A. Mansali, mansali
   B. Mansali dima.  (The introductory phrases when a riddle session begins)

2. A. Mini mini fo mini fo?
   B. Ninsi finta, bari a nono koita. (No translation)
   The cow is black, but its milk is white.

3. A. Chorok chondong?
   B. Bendang bulata bara kono. (No translation)
   A needle is lost in the long grass.

4. A. Kirikap?
   B. Sama nyoita bere kang. (No translation)
   An elephant knelt on a rock.

5. A. Ntondokulondong?
   B. Nyankumo, a nengo si jangaya nyo-o-nya, a te bolo kono newung no la. (No translation)
   A cat, however long its tongue, cannot lick inside a (bottle-shaped) gourd.

6. A. Basa ba kobali?
   B. Banko. The big mat without a back.

7. A. Kwiam ba ninintang?
   B. Sango. The ground.

8. A. Kotondi fe ba bobali?
   B. Lolo. The big cotton field which cannot be picked?

9. A. Suto kono fandi fing tombombalo?
   B. Bida. The black strip (of cloth) in the bush which cannot be picked up.

10. A. Suto kono duntunding nya wuleng?
    B. Teng kulo. The little cock in the bush with red eyes.

11. A. N tata Njai ya,
    m mang Njai tara je,
    Njai la wulo ye n king?
    B. Ni i tata tomborong tombong,
    ni i mang tomborongo tara je,
    tomborong nganingyo ye i so. I went to Njai's place,
    I did not find Njai there,
    Njai's dog bit me?
    When you go to pick tomborong (fruit),
    you do not find any tomborong there,
    but the tomborong thorns prick you.
MANSALOLU

1. A. Nyínkinki nyankanka?
   B. Konoma fula te nyo bambu no la.

2. A. Kitiri katara nombo?
   B. Mo ning samato te sele no la santo.

3. A. Kolonda la ke koi?
   B. Mirang koyo.

4. A. Kolonda la ke fingo?
   B. Kunango.

5. A. Kolonda la ke wuleng?
   B. Dumbo.

6. A. N tata m bitang-kunda to, i ye baso fene n ye, dinding nya kandi ye n sabang a kang.
   B. Sio.

7. A. Sing nani lota sing nani kang, a be sing nani batu la?
   B. Nyankumo lota tabulo kang, a be nyina bato la?

8. A. Nga nna ninso siti bungo kono, a binolu be banta?
   B. Dimba ning sisio.

9. A. Tili jelu be duniya kono?
   B. Tili saba, kunung tambita, m be bi kono, soma je na.

10. A. Fen neng, m borita, m borita, m ma muta no.
    N nata, n jonkotota, nga a muta.
    B. N ninfiyo.

11. A. Fen neng bul't'a la, sing t'a la, a ka jambo yerenke.
    B. Pakaya.

RIDDLES

1. (No translation)
   Two pregnant women cannot carry each other on their backs.

2. (No translation)
   A person cannot climb up (a tree) with sandals on.

3. The well mouth's white husband?
   A white calabash.

4. The well mouth's black husband?
   A wooden bowl (usually dark in color)

5. The well's red husband?
   Water jar (a red clay pot).

6. I went to my in-laws place, they spread a mat for me, a hasty child sat on it before me.
   A fly.

7. Four legs stood on four legs, waiting for four legs?
   A cat on a table, waiting for a mouse.

8. I tied my cow in the house, its horns are outside?
   Fire and smoke. (Smoke comes through the house thatched roof).

9. How many days are there in the world?
   Three days; yesterday has passed, we are in today, tomorrow is coming.

10. There is something, I ran and ran, and did not catch it.
    I came back, and squatted down, and caught it.
    My shadow.

11. There is something, it has no arms, it has no legs, but it makes little (millet) balls.
    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.
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".

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".

(Dodou K. N'Jie)  (D.P. Gamble)
Collected by David P. Gamble in Kiang

MANSALOLU       RIDDLES

1. A. fen(g) neng, a kungo firiing   there is something, with loosened hair,  
a tata na Mari All ya   it went to God's place  
debero la.   to have its hair done.  
B. tengo / sibi-karango.   palm tree/ rhun palm leaves  

2. A. fen(g) neng,   there is something  
a k'a be na Mari Alla   it looked as if it was about to strike  
junku la.   God.  
B. kuda.   pestle (which is raised upwards with each stroke)  

3. A. fen(g) neng, a ye da yele,   there is something, it has opened its  
a ka a be Mari Alla   mouth, it is about to swallow God.  
kunung.   mortar. (the open top of which faces  
B. kulungo.   skyward).  

4. A. fen(g) neng,   there is something,  
bul't'a la, sin(g) t'a la,   it has no arms, it has no legs,  
a ka dinka sing.   but it digs holes.  
B. sumuna.   urine.  

5. A. kuring kese batanding fa.   a little calabash full of cowries  
    nying keso.   a mouth full of teeth  

6. A. mo fulo be bung kiling kono,   two people are in one house,  
i buka nyo je.   they don't see each other.  
B. berekilo.   testicles.  

7. A. nga na duntundung ne sareng,   I buried my little cock,  
sanji saba, ni nga wura,   if I dug it up after three years,  
a kokoleta.   it still crows.  
B. talango.   a bell.  

8. A. nga na turaring ne fa,   I slaughtered my little bull,  
sanji saba, ni n tata je,   three years after, if I went there,  
    wati-o-wati n si a no tara   always I should find its traces there.  
    je.   charcoal.  
B. kembo.  

9. A. fulanding keme,   a hundred age mates (twins)  
kurutu juju kiling.   one trouser cord.  
B. fitarango.   a broom.  

10. A. sunkutu keme,   a hundred little girls  
    joni juju kiling,   a single strand of waist beads.  
    B. fitarango.   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 nunkule.

14. A. yirinding be fafa la jonkongo to, a la baalu buka domo, fo wand' 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.

(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.
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."

THREE MEN

There were three men,
one said "No one ever owes me a 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,
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)

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.

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.'
N1 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,
itel julo te tu mo la,
kelo be bang na."

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."

Juma le bolota ?

Who was right ?
"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.