

MANDINKA STORIES - DICTATED, WRITTEN, OR RECORDED

Collected and translated

by

David P. Gamble

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.
- No.5 MEDICAL MANDINKA.  
5 pp.
- No.6 MANDINKA STORIES FROM BOOKS PUBLISHED PRIOR TO 1960.  
28 pp.
- No.7 MANDINKA TALES FROM THE NEWSPAPER 'KIBARO': 1951-1955. 49 pp.
- No.8 MANDINKA STORIES- DICTATED, WRITTEN OR RECORDED.  
39 pp.
- No.9 A MANDINKA NARRATIVE- "MANDING KUNO" by A.K.Rahman.  
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	ñ	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.

# CONTENTS

	Page
1 Suluo (The Hyaena who prepared his mother's burial) -A.K.Rahman	1
2 Suluo (The Hyaena who pretended to have finished praying)- A.K.Rahman	1
3 Suluo ning ba kotongo (Hyaena and Goat Go Fishing) - A.K. Rahman	3
4 Mansa ning a la kong muso (The King and his Hated Wife) -A.K.Rahman	4
5 Muso ning nyambi kino (The Woman and the Cassava Root) -A.K.Rahman	5
6 Dindingo ning bambo (The Child and the Crocodile) - A. K. Rahman	7
7 Fang-kanta man jau (Self-protection is not bad) - Bakari Sidibe	10
8 Ba aning samo (The Goat and the Elephant) - Anon.	11
9 Sango la nyamengo (Hare's Cunning) - Anon.	14
10 Dinding ning Keba (The Clever Child and the Old Man) - Anon.	16
11 Simaya Boro (Medicine for Long Life) - Jeri Job & Keba Dafe	19
12 Tankongo aning nyankonkorongo (The Hartebeeste and the Chameleon)- Usman Bajo	20
13 Suluo ning ba kotongo a ning sango (The Hyaena, the Goat, and the Hare) - Usman Bajo	21
14 Siseo ning wolo (The Hen and the Bush-fowl)- Usman Bajo	24
15 -- (Hare destroys other animals) - Usman Bajo	26
16 -- (The Laibo and the woman) - Jenaba Darame	29
17 Sulu ning sango a ning jata (Hyaena, Hare and Lion) - Anon.	30
18 The Two friends - Ebrima Camara	32
19 Man who is asked to win daughter by climbing a tree while her father shoots arrows at him - Babukar Touray	33
20 Older brothers saved by younger brother - Sidi Sanneh	34
21 The Clever Child and the Old Man - Anon.	36

Source: Written by A.K.Rahman, c. 1947

(1) SULUO

Lung kiling suluo ba fata,  
 a kiling y'a ku,  
 a y'a bade.  
 A fango tata sanga kilaria la.  
  
 Biring molu benta sada bo lungu,  
 a ye ninso fa,  
 A y'a ke kude saba ti.  
 A ko "nying dong, fure kula le ta mu;  
 nying dong sanga dantela le ta mu;  
 nying dong meng folo y'a ma.  
 Ndung m bulo b'a kang."  
 A dung ate fango le y'a ba ku;  
 a y'ala sanga kilaria ke.  
 Wo nya la sulu kiling y'a la ninso  
 domo.  
 Mo bee bulu kensengo tata.

THE HYAENA

One day hyaena's mother died,  
 he alone washed the body,  
 he buried her.  
 He himself went round to spread the news  
 of the death.  
 When people gathered on the day of the charity,  
 he killed a cow.  
 He made it into three portions.  
 He said "This one the corpse-washer gets it,  
 this one the news carrier gets it;  
 this one, the first person to touch it.  
 And my hand is on it."  
 he himself had washed his mother,  
 he had gone round with the news of the death.  
 In that way hyaena alone ate his cow.  
  
 Everyone went home empty handed.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

Source: Written by A.K.Rahman, c.1947

(2) SULUO

Lung killing sotota dafengolu bee benta  
ye ninsi ba siti,  
i ko ning meng na misilmeya timata,  
adung a ka suba sali a wato la,

wo s'a ta.

Suluo tata i la misiro kono,  
a ju kensengo fo ning suba fonyoto  
y'a juo fe, a si kuning.

Biring ye la fo suba sita,  
sango nata, a ka be wadani la,  
a ko "Allahu Akubar."

Sulu kuninta, a barata,  
a sita, a ko "Asalam alekum."

A y'afang ke ko a salita  
fo a ye bandi.

Sango fota.

I ko katung a be wadani la tumo  
menna, wo y'a tara sulu ye bandi  
salo la.

Suluo n a la ninso tata.

THE HYAENA

One day it happened all the animals met,  
they tied up a cow,  
they said whoever was a complete Muslim,  
and carried out the early morning prayer  
in time,

he should receive it.

Hyaena went into their mosque,  
with bare buttocks so that when the morning  
breeze blew on his buttocks, he would waken.

When they had slept until early morning,  
hare came, and was beginning the call to  
prayer, saying "Allahu Akubar."

Hyaena woke up, and was startled,  
he sat up, and said "Asalam alekum."

He pretended he had prayed  
and come to the end.

Hare lost.

They said that when he was making the call  
to prayer, it happened that hyaena had  
finished praying.

Hyaena went off with his cow.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

Source: Written by A.K.Rahman, c. 1947

(3) Suluo ning ba kotongo

Ba kotongo ning suluo le tata  
demo la lung kiling i ning sorolu.  
I futata leo to tumo meng,  
suluo lafita ba kotongo la  
berekilo domo la.  
A k'a ye ko "Ite ye lo nying kungo  
to, ye singolu werendende,  
ji woyo si tara i singolu tema,  
i ning soro.  
Nte si ta wo kungo to,  
n si jio mamandi,  
yeolu si bori nang i kang.  
Bari ye folo meng nata,  
i si wo bula. A si tambi,  
fulanjango i si wo so."  
Ba kotongo ko "Ha."  
Sulu tata le kungo to,  
a ye jio busa,  
a mamanta hani fo ba kotongo  
y'a moi, a tunenta nang.  
Ba kotongo ye ji boro je nang  
a be wararing.  
A sobita ko suluo le mu,  
A lo-kun-ta hanifo a tembeta a fe,  
a ya so soro la a kungo to,  
Suluo borimborinto muruta,  
a lota le kungo to, a ko:  
"Ba kotong, kori i mang ye folo so."  
Ba kotong ko "Nga so le."  
Sulu ko "Eh, a fele, y'a bai,  
kana hauji. N'a nata silang,  
kana koronto."  
Sulu tunenta koteng, a nata,  
ba kotong ye ji boro haina,  
a ye lo ku f'a tembeta a fe,  
a y'a so a tulo to.  
Suluo borita, a lota, a ko  
"Ba kotong, Ah, ye yeo so hanifo  
n tulo ye yello bo jang."  
A borita, a tata wulo kono.  
Ba kotong saita suo kono.

Hyaena and Goat

Goat and hyaena went fishing  
one day with their fishing-spears.  
When they reached the swamp,  
hyaena wanted to eat goat's testicles.  
  
He said to him " You stand over this side  
and spread out your legs,  
so that the stream flows between your legs,  
with your fish-spear.  
I shall go to that side,  
I will stir up the water,  
the fish will move towards you.  
but the first that comes,  
you should leave that. It will pass,  
the second you should stab."  
Goat said "Yes."  
Hyaena went to his side,  
he struck the water,  
he moved until goat  
heard him, and then dived.  
Goat saw the movement in the water coming  
and it was large.  
He suspected that it was hyaena,  
He stood firm until it was level with him,  
and struck it with his spear in the head.  
Hyaena came back running,  
he stood on the bank and said  
"Goat, I hope you did not strike the first."  
Goat replied "I struck it."  
Hyaena said "Eh, see, you've driven it away,  
don't rush. If it comes again,  
don't be in a hurry."  
Hyaena dived again, and came,  
Goat saw the movement in the water,  
he stood firm until it was level with him,  
and pierced it in its ear.  
Hyaena ran up, and stood, and said  
"Goat, ah, you've stabbed the fish so  
deeply that my ear is bleeding."  
He ran off and went into the bush.  
Goat returned home.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

This story is paralleled by one given in René Basset: Contes Populaires d' Afrique, pp. 171-172, quoting Binger: Du Niger au Golfe de Guinée, Paris, 1892, t.II, p.9 (La hyène et le lièvre. A Mandé story).

Source: A.K.Rahman, c. 1947 (Written)

(4) Mansa ning a la kong muso

Mansa ke kiling sotota a ye musu  
saba soto.  
Nyinu kono fula mu a la kanu  
musolu ti, sabanjango a ye wo ke  
jong muso ti.  
Nying jong muso nata wulu,  
a ye ding ke fula soto.  
A ye wulu be wulu kara feo to  
katung bung bete te a bulu.  
Dindingolu kebaiata tumomeng  
i tata wula.  
Ala nata i harije bake,  
i saita nang.  
Biring mansa la musolu ye i je  
i be ko itelu le dingolu mu i ti.  
Mansa nata a fo ko mo be si beng  
bantaba to.  
Biring muso do ye i je nang  
a kumata ko  
"nding je, nding je,  
karamadendeng kara silo."  
Dindingolu ko  
"ye n wulu minto,  
karamadendeng kara silo? "  
Muso ko:  
"nge wulu jonkongo la,  
karamadendeng kara silo."  
Dindingolu ko a ye ko  
"ite te m ba ti."  
Do fanang wulita a ko  
"ndingo je,  
karamadendeng kara silo."  
Dindingolu ko a ye ko  
"ye n wulu minto ?"  
Muso ko :  
"nge i wulu jaba feoto,  
karamadendeng kara silo."  
I ko a ye ko "ite te m ba ti."  
Jong muso nata a ko  
"ndingo je,  
karamadendeng kara silo."  
Dindingolu ko a ye ko  
"ye n wulu minto,  
karamadendeng kara silo ?"  
A ko i ye ko  
"ng'ali wulu kara feoto,  
karmadendeng kara silo."  
I ko a ye ko "ite le mu m ba ti."  
I sapita a kang,  
ye a samba suo kono,  
ye siti fanolu di a la.  
Wo kola Mansa nata tubi jong muso ye,  
a ye horoma hanifo a tata fa.

The King and his hated wife

There was once a king who had three  
wives.  
Among these two were his favorites  
the third he treated her like a slave.  
  
This slave wife eventually gave birth,  
she had two sons.  
She gave birth to them in the indigo patch  
because she had not a good house.  
When the children grew up  
they went abroad.  
God made them prosper very much,  
and they came back.  
When the king's wives saw them  
they all said that they were their children.  
The King went on to say all should meet at  
at the bantaba.  
When one of the women saw them coming  
she sang  
"See my child, see my child,  
(translation uncertain)  
The children replied  
"Where did you give birth to us ?"  
  
The woman said  
"I gave birth in the back yard,"  
  
The children said to her:  
"You are not our mother."  
Another got up and said:  
"See my child,  
  
The children said to her  
"Where did you give birth to us ?"  
The woman said  
"I gave birth to you in the onion path,  
  
They said to her "You are not our mother."  
The slave woman came and sang  
"See my child,  
  
The children said to her  
"Where did you give birth to us ?"  
  
She said to them  
"I gave birth to you in the indigo patch,  
  
They said to her "You are our mother."  
They embraced her  
and took her home,  
and gave her clothes.  
After that the King went on to repent about  
the wife,  
and respected her until she died.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

Source: Written by A.K.Rahman, c.1947

(5) Muso ning nyambi kino

Musu le mu a mang ding soto,  
a tata nyambi singo la,  
a ye nyambi kini ba bondi.  
A kumata ko "nying ye na yelema  
n ye ding kering ba ti bi."  
Biring a ye wo fo nyambi kino  
yelemata ding keoti.  
Biring a tata suo kono  
a ko a ke ye ko "N ke, nte la  
nyambi singo keta n ye kaira ba ti,  
a fele nga ding keo soto."

Ye dingo kuli ye a to la Salifu la.

Biring dingo kuliata domanding,  
a bulo diata fairo to bake.  
A ka kunundingolu fa.  
Ning dindingolu nata a ba buka  
song a n i ye ta tulung dula.

Musu keba kiling tarata je  
wo ko Salifu ba ye ko  
"a tu je a ye ta tulung,  
i dinding damangolu le mu."  
Salifu ba ko dindingolu ye ko  
"ali ta tulung baring ali kana  
a to sari santo."

Salifu ning dindingolu tata tulungo  
la.

Biring i be tulungo la, dinding  
kiling kumata ko "Salifu, Salifu."  
dindingo kiliri kango jamfata  
wo nyala mansadibongo  
kumata santo ko "hu, nyambo to  
Salifu, n namuna wo je."  
Biring mansadibongo ye wo fo  
Salifu borita a tata lo a la  
dinka dato, a ba ye a sing damento.  
a ko:

"na hing i la nyaro la  
n je ta kuri kungo to,  
mansadibong ju kuli jaka,  
karangkato keba nyaka,  
Salifu nte nyambi kuri yole,  
Salifu nte nyambi kuri yole. "

Biring a ye nying donkilo la,  
a tunenta banko kono hanifo a  
siso to, a saita, a ye a la  
koteng, banko ye a kunung;  
a saita a la nyambi kini ya to.

The woman and the cassava root

There was a woman who had no child,  
she went to dig out cassava,  
she dug up a very large cassava root.  
She said "If only this would change to  
a little son for me today."  
As soon as she said that the cassava root  
changed to a son.  
When she went home,  
she said to her husband "My husband, my  
cassava digging turned to good luck,  
see I have a son."

They shaved the child's head, and named him  
Salifu.

Shortly after the shaving,  
his hand was very good at throwing.  
He used to kill the birds (that damage crops).  
When children came, his mother would not  
agree that he should go with them to the  
playing place.

One old woman was there  
She said to Salifu's mother

"Let him go to play,  
They are only children."

Salifu's mother said to the children  
"Go to play but do not call his  
name aloud."

Salifu and the children went to play.

When they were playing, one child  
called "Salifu, Salifu."  
the child's calling voice went far,  
in that way a ground-hornbill  
up above said "hu, cassava called  
Salifu, I never saw that before."  
When the ground-hornbill said that  
Salifu ran and went and stood beside  
the opening of the hole where his mother had  
dug him, and sang:

"Mother here are the ornaments  
I am going to the washing place,  
the ground-hornbill's zig-zagging behind,  
the lousy old person's gaiety,  
Salifu I will slip away washing cassava ?  
Salifu, I will slip away washing cassava."

When he had sung this song,  
he dived into the ground up to his  
chest, he returned, and lay down again,  
the earth swallowed him;  
he returned to his cassava root place.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)



A Malinké version of this tale is given in:

F.V.Equilbecq: Contes Indigènes de l'Ouest-Africain Français, 1915, pp.144-147.

Told by Kamissa Sonko, Fada NGourma, 1912.

A Mende version is given in:

Marion Kilson: Royal Antelope and Spider. West African Mende Tales, 1976,  
pp.144-147.

Source: Written by A.K.Rahman, c.1947

(6) DINDINGO NING BAMBO

Suto dindingo ka ta demola an ala wulolu.  
Silang a tata demo la,  
a y'a tara bambo funtita nang tinto-la, a ye kilo la.  
A y'a tara bambo a tamata meng nyona a ning ba jamfata nyo la bake.  
Wulolu ye bambo je,  
a be bitiring tinto to;  
wulolu kumata, dindingo borita,  
a ye bambo tara je.

Bambo k'a ye ko  
"N lafita ye m makoi,  
fo i si n samba ba to,  
fo fano kana (n tara ?) jang."  
Dindingo k'a ye ko:  
"Tonya le mu. M fana nga nying moi nte fa la.  
bari ke samba fo ba to,  
nte hanyi la wo la."  
Bambo k'a ye "Bari ite nyinya la,  
n te jo jauwiya la."  
Dindingo k'a ye "Hanibi,  
n si i samba."

Dindingo ye julo bo,  
a y'a sing fulo siti,  
an a bulu fulo,  
a y'a sika,  
an a ye ba waling.  
A futata ba dala, a y'a jindi.  
A k'a b'a firing na,  
bambo k'a ye ko "Hani, kana n firing jang, n samba fo ba kono,  
ye n firing je..  
M batata bake, n te tama no la."  
Dindingo y'a samba fo ba kono.  
A y'a firing, a ka ba ko di la.  
Bambo y'a muta, a k'a ye ko.  
"Nyinya sara mu jauwiya le ti."

Dindingo k'a ye: "M me soso,  
bari nga sede saba nyini,  
ni i sonta, i si n fa."  
I be je, ye fali keba je;  
a nata ; bambo k'a ye ko:  
"Nyinya sara mu jauwiya le ti bang?"  
Falo k'a ye ko "Ha, katung nte be dindingo tumo meng, n ka duno ke,  
m mari ka nyo di n na,  
a ka m mindi,

THE CHILD AND THE CROCODILE

At night a boy used to go hunting with his dogs.  
Now he went hunting,  
he found that a crocodile had come out on the bank, and had laid eggs.  
It happened that the distance the crocodile had travelled was far from the river.  
The dogs saw the crocodile,  
lying on the dry land,  
the dogs barked, the child ran up,  
and found the crocodile there.

The crocodile said to him  
"I want you to help me,  
by taking me to the river,  
so that dawn does not find me here."  
The child replied to him  
"It is true. I too heard this from my father,  
but to take you to the river,  
I would not dare."  
The crocodile replied "But your kindness,  
I would not repay with badness."  
The child said to him "Nevertheless,  
I'll take you."

The child took a rope,  
and tied the two legs,  
and the two arms.  
and picked him up,  
and went towards the river.  
When he reached the river, he put him down.  
He was about to loosen him,  
(when) the crocodile said to him "No, do not loosen me here, take me into the river,  
and loosen me there...  
I am very tired, and cannot walk."  
The child took him into the river.  
He loosened him and turned his back.  
The crocodile took him, and said to him:  
"The reward for kindness is wickedness."

The child said to him "I do not doubt you,  
but let me look for three witnesses,  
if they agree, you should kill me."  
They waited, they saw an old donkey;  
he came; the crocodile asked him  
"Is the reward for kindness wickedness ?"  
The donkey said "Yes, because when I was young, I used to carry loads,  
my master would give me millet,  
he would give me (water) to drink,

baring i ma je saing,  
a buka n dankung,  
katung m buka duno no."  
Bambo ko dindingo ye  
"Ya moi, kilung y'a fo,  
a tuta fula."  
Dindingo k'a ye "Yoo."

I be je, su koto fana nata.  
Bambo k'a ye "Duniya dung nyinya  
sara mu jauwiya le ti bang ?"  
A k'a ye "Ha, nte fele,  
m be dinding tumo meng,  
m mari ka nyo di n na,  
a ka m mindi,  
bari i ma je saing,  
n kotota, i buka sele n kang,  
ye n fili wo nya ma."  
Bambo ko dindingo ye ko  
"Y'a moi. A tuta sede kilung,  
ning wo ko 'ha', n si domo."  
Dindingo k'a ye "Ha."

I be wo to sango fana nata,  
a k'a be minna.  
Bambo k'a ye "Sang, duniya dung  
nyinya sara mu jauwiya le ti bang ?"  
Sango k'a ye ko "Nte buka jamfajang  
kumo jabi. Funti nang,  
ye ne la kumo-nya fo n ye."  
Bambo ning dindingo bee funtita.  
I nata. I lota sango dala.  
Sango k'a ye ko "M buka bula kumo  
tema.  
I mang kumo folo dula fo n'ye."

A ye dindingo nyininka,  
dindingo ko "Nga tara tinta to,  
a ko nga a makoi,  
nga a nati ba to.  
N fana y'a siti,  
nga duni fo an nata ba to."  
Sango k'a ye ko "Alinga ta,  
fo al ye nyo tara da meng,  
nga je jube."  
Bambo sonta, dindingo y'a siti.  
Koteke a y'a duni.  
I tata fo je.

Sango ye dindingo nyininka  
"Ye bambo tara janne bang ?"  
A k'a ye "Ha."  
A ko bambo ye ko  
"Dindingo ye tara janne ?"  
A k'a ye "Ha. Nna kilolu fele jang."

but don't you see now,  
he ignores me,  
because I am not able to carry loads."  
The crocodile said to the child  
"Do you hear, one has said so,  
there remains two."  
The child said to him "I agree."

They waited, an old horse also came.  
The crocodile said to him "In the world  
is the reward for kindness wickedness ?"  
He said to him "Yes, here I am,  
when I was young,  
my master used to give me millet,  
he used to give me (water) to drink,  
but don't you see now,  
I have become old, they don't ride me,  
they have just left me."  
The crocodile said to the child  
"Do you hear ? There remains one witness,  
when that one says 'Yes', I will eat you."  
The child said "Yes."

They waited (lit. were at that place), a hare  
also came, to drink.  
The crocodile asked him "Hare, in the world  
is the reward for kindness wickedness ?"  
Hare said to him "I do not reply to far-off  
speech. Come out,  
and tell me the reason for the argument."  
The crocodile and the child both came out.  
They came and stood beside the hare.  
Hare said to him "I don't intervene in the  
middle of an argument.  
You have not told me the starting point of the  
argument."  
He asked the child,  
The child said "I found him on the bank,  
he asked me to help him,  
and carry him to the river.  
I myself tied him,  
I carried him until we came to the river."  
The hare said "Let us go,  
so that you shall show me your meeting place,  
so that I may see it."  
The crocodile agreed, the child tied him up,  
Again he put him on his head.  
They went there.

Hare asked the child  
"Is it here you found the crocodile ?"  
He replied to him "Yes."  
He said to the crocodile  
"Is it here the child found you ?"  
He replied "Yes. My eggs are here."

Sango ko dindingo ye ko: "A sika."	The hare said to the child "Pick him up."
Dindingo y'a sika, a y'a la a kunto.	The child picked him up, and put him on his head.
A ko dindingo ye ko:	He (hare) asked the child:
"I ba ka bambo domo bang ?" 1	"Does your mother eat crocodile ?"
A ka ye "Ha."	The child replied "Yes."
A k'a ye "I fa ka bambo domo bang ?"	He asked him "Does your father eat crocodile ?"
A k'a ye "Ha."	He replied "Yes."
Sango ko dindingo ye ko:	The hare said to the child:
"Ta, a samba i ba ning i fa ye, ye ta domo, ning mo ye nyinya ke, Alla be i jo la nyinya le la."	"Go and take it to your father and mother, and (go ?) and eat it, if a person has done a kindness Alla will repay you with kindness."
A ko bambo ye ko:	"He said to the crocodile:
"Mo meng/nyinya ke i ye /ye ? ning y'a jo jauwiya la, Alla be jo la jauwiya la le."	a person who has done you a kindness, if you pay him with wickedness, God will repay him with wickedness."

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

1. The crocodile is the tano (totem) animal of certain families (e.g. the Kamaras) and they cannot eat its flesh.
2. A version was published in Kibaro, December 1953, p.2, written by K.M.Sedileigh.
3. H. Labouret : Les Manding et leur langue, 1934 gives the following versions:  
  
In Malinké dialect of Guinea (pp. 249-253)  
Extracted from Dictionnaire Français Malinké et Malinké Français  
par un Missionnaire du Saint-Esprit, Conakry, 1906, p. XXXVIII.  
  
In the Bambara dialect of Ségou (pp. 253-256)  
Extracted from the Dictionnaire Bambara-Français du R.P. Bazin,  
Paris, 1906. p.690.
4. A Wolof version (translated into French) is given in Birago Diop:  
Les Contes d'Amadou Koumba, Paris: Presence Africaine, 1947 ?,  
pp. 97-104.
5. A Bambara version "Le chasseur, le boa et le lièvre", which involves a hunter carrying a python back to the water, and in which an old cow and an old horse are called as witnesses before hare, is given in Moussa Travélé : Proverbes et Contes Bambara, 1923, pp. 188-195.

Labouret, 1934, pp. 258-261) also gives a version in the Malinké dialect of Kouroussa in which the main character is the snake.

6. The story has also been given in:  
Bayo, Abdoulie (Transcriber)  
Dindingo aning Bambo: Mandinka Talingo (The boy and the crocodile:  
A Mandinka Story), Banjul: Cultural Archives, 1976, 18 pp.  
Mimeo.
7. The fable of the ungrateful crocodile is to be found in  
E. W. Lane: The Thousand and One Nights, (1859 1st edition).  
In 1889 edition, Vol.1, p.84, and note 28 on p. 114, where  
the story is given in full. Here it is found in an Egyptian  
context.
8. A Portuguese translation of a version from Guinea-Bissau is  
given in Manuel Belchior: Contos Mandingas, Porto: Portucalense  
Editora, n.d., 207-211. "A sentença da lebre."

Source: Bakari Sidibe, 1948 ?

(7) Fang-kanta man jau

I ko ke kiling le mu,  
a tata wulo kono,  
jato y'a bai, a borita,  
a seleta yiro santo,  
a tata, a tata fo yiri turo to,  
a ye santo jibe,  
a ye solo je yiri bulo santo,  
a ye fango (ta),  
a ye yiri bulo kuntu,  
solo boita, jato y'a muta,  
a n a tata.  
keo jita, a saita.

nyinne a tinna Mandinkol' ko  
'Fang-kanta man jau.'  
I ko 'Fankanta kurto, moneo  
buka a fara."

Self-protection is not bad  
(i.e. Precaution)

They say there was one man,  
he went into the bush,  
a lion chased him, he ran off,  
he climbed up a tree,  
he went up and up to the top of the tree,  
he looked up,  
he saw a leopard on the branch above,  
he took his cutlass (machete),  
and cut the branch,  
the leopard fell, the lion took him,  
and went off with him.  
The man came down and went home.

That is why Mandinka people say  
'Precaution is not bad.'  
They say "Protecting trousers , regret  
does not tear them."

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

This is similar to the story given in W.T.Hamlyn: A Short Study of the Western Mandinka Language, 1935, p.92

Source: Duplicated version. No date, no author named.

Perhaps from the Nutrition Field Working Party, Jenyer, c. 1948

(Copied with a few minor changes e.g. inte in original changed to nte  
be (all) changed to bee)

(8) BA ANING SAMO

Tuma kiling sotota samo aning ba  
sonkata.  
Samo ko ala domoro siyata ba ti.  
Ba ko ala domoro siyata samo ti.  
Samo ko ba ye "Nte jube,  
n warata le bake,  
sinya tang nte warata ite ti,  
katu na domoro siyata ila domoro ti."  
Ba ko "Tonya. Ite le warata nte ti,  
bari nte ka domori ke wati o wati,  
wo le y'a tina na domoro siyata  
ila domoroti."  
Samo juso kandita, fo a sarita ba  
kang,  
a ka ba ye ko "Ila domoro yitandi  
n na."  
Ba ko "Sanying nga domoro dati,  
n s'a je meng la domoro tambita,  
do ta la wo se do domo."  
Samo sonta; ba ko a pareta;  
samo ko a pareta.  
A ye yiri bulo muta a numangola.  
Ba fana datita.  
A ye jamba fana ta, a ye wo kunung.

Tukung a ye nyamu jama ta,  
kabiring a ye kunung, a ye do ta,  
kabiring a ye kunung, a ye do ta,  
-samo be taring dorong,  
ba be nyamo demanding demanding  
domo la.  
A be nyamo nyimila demanding  
demanding.  
A be nyang-nyimola wo wato meta,  
nying la nyang nyimo a ka la mira le.

Sanying (i) nyanta dameng domola  
wo bee banta.  
Samo tata domoro do nyini.  
Ba fana tata domoro nyinola kara  
do la.  
bari ba mang jamfa.  
Tilo bee, samo be domorola dorong,  
a ye nyamo domo,  
a ye jambo domo,  
a ye yiri bulo domo,  
a ye yiri sulo domo,

THE GOAT AND THE ELEPHANT

Once upon a time elephant and goat quarreled.

Elephant said his eating was greater than goat's.  
Goat said his eating was greater than elephant's.  
Elephant said to goat: "Look at me,  
I am very big,  
I am ten times bigger than you,  
because my eating is more than yours."  
Goat said: "True. You are bigger than I,  
but I am always eating,  
that is why my eating is more than your eating."

Elephant was so angry he shouted at goat,  
and said to him "Show me your eating."

Goat said "Now let us begin eating,  
we shall see whose eating is the greatest,  
that one shall eat the other."  
Elephant agreed. Goat said he was ready;  
elephant said he was ready.  
He took a branch with his trunk.  
Goat also began.  
He (elephant) also took leaves, and swallowed  
them.  
Then he took much grass,  
when he had swallowed it, he took more,  
when he swallowed it, he took more.  
-elephant was eating in a hurry  
(but) goat was eating the grass little by  
little.  
He was chewing the grass little by little.

He was chewing the cud then for a long time,  
while chewing, he was thinking (planning).

Now the place they had to eat was all finished.

Elephant went off to look for more food.  
Goat also went to look for food on another side,

but goat did not go far.  
All day elephant was continually eating,  
he ate grass,  
he ate leaves,  
he ate branches,  
he ate roots,

A ye domoro ke fo a fata,  
a mang tama no.  
Wo tuma a mang domoro no kotenke.

Wo tumo suto ji na,  
sama tata ba jubela.  
A be tama a be karo bee jubela,  
a kal a fo:  
"Nte le nga jang bee domo,  
nying yirolu jube,  
nte le nga i jambolu bee domo,  
nying banko jube jang,  
nte le nga nyamo bee domo."  
A b'a fo la a fang kono ko  
"Nte nga ba no domoro la."  
A be wo fo la wato menna,  
a ye nyato jube, a ye ba haina  
laring bere ba kang,  
a be nyimirola.  
Samo ye karo bee jube, a mang  
nyamo je, a mang jambo fana je,  
a ye ba nyininka:  
"Hani bi i be domorola bang ?"  
A ye ba je nyimiro la,  
bari a mang la a la.  
Ba ko ye ko "M be domoro la folo,  
m mang fonyo folo.  
Saying y'a long ko nte le ka  
domoro ke ite ti."  
Samo y'a nyininka "Ite ka munne  
katu m mang nyamo je,  
m mang jambo je ?"  
Ba ko "N ka bero le domo,  
ni nga bero bang,  
m be na ite le domo la."  
Samo silata, katu a y'a long ko  
meng ye bero domo no,  
wo te korila ate domo la,  
katuko bero le bambanta ate la  
kulo ti.  
A lafita bori la, bari a kono  
le fata, a mang bori no,  
bari a ka yesi yesi.  
Kabiring wo tumo samo silata ba la.

He was eating until he was full,  
and could not walk.  
At that time he could not eat anything again.

At the time night was coming,  
Elephant went to look for goat.  
As he was going he kept looking on all sides,  
and saying:  
"It was I who ate everything here,  
look at these trees,  
it was I who ate all the leaves,  
look at the ground here,  
it was I who ate all the grass."  
He was saying to himself  
"I have beaten goat at eating."  
When he was saying that,  
he looked ahead, and saw goat far off  
lying on a large rock chewing,

Elephant looked on all sides, he did not  
see any grass, he did not see leaves,  
he asked goat:  
"You are still eating ?"  
He saw goat chewing  
but did not believe it.  
Goat replied "I am still eating,  
I have not stopped yet.  
Now you know I can eat more than you."

Elephant asked him "What are you eating,  
because I don't see any grass,  
I don't see any leaves ?"  
Goat said "It is rocks I am eating,  
and when I finish the rocks,  
I am going to eat you."  
Elephant was afraid, because he knew that  
whoever ate rocks,  
would not hesitate to eat him,  
because rocks are harder than his skin.

He wanted to run off, but his belly  
was so full, he could not run,  
and could only stagger away.  
Since that time elephant is afraid of goat.

This is a widespread tale. A Limba version from Sierra Leone is given in  
Ruth Finnegan: Limba Stories & Storytelling, 1967, pp. 329-330.

A brief Vai version is given in George W. Ellis: Negro Culture in West Africa,  
1914, p.191. (English translation).

The English translation of a Gbande version is given in Benjamin G. Dennis:  
The Gbandes. A People of the Liberian Hinterland, 1972, pp. 218-219.

Another version ("Why elephants flee from goats") is given in A. Doris Banks



Henries: Liberian Folklore (1966), pp. 85-87, its origin not being indicated.

René Basset: Contes Populaires d'Afrique, Paris, 1903, pp. 196-197 gives a Bullom version from Sierra Leone, taken from Nylaender : Grammar and Vocabulary of the Bullom Language, 1814, Church Missionary Society, pp. 53-54.

Thomas Winterbottom (1803) gives a Temne version.

in : An Account of the Native Africans in the Neighbourhood of Sierra Leone to which is added an Account of the Present State of Medecine Among Them. 2 vols.

Temne version . Vol.1 p. 120.

See also:

Mariko, Keletigui

Sur les rives du fleuve Niger : Contes Sahéliens.

Paris : Karthala, 1984, 85-87.

(Cock & elephant).

Source: Unpublished. Probably dating from about 1948. Copy in  
D.P.Gamble's Field notes. Copied from Duplicated version.

(9) SANGO LA NYAMENGO

Sango tata a mari Alla ya.  
A ka ye "n nata nyameng nyino la."  
Wo ka ye ko "I si kacolu nyini  
n ye a batafa, ning siyo nono,  
wo fana batafa. Ning miniyang  
kendo. Ning sulu kendo.  
I si wolu samba nang."  
Sango tata a ye bata fula nyini.  
A tata kacolu be dameng.  
Kabiring a sita wola,  
a b'a fola ko "A b'a fala. Hani,  
a t'a fa la."  
Kacolu ka ye ko  
"i ning la molu ka mune diyamo ?"  
A k'a ye ko "ning nga bato da  
yele ni ali dunta je,  
ali te nying fandi la no."  
Wolu ko a da yele.  
Kacolu dunta fo bato fata.  
A ya da sorong. A tambita.

Siyo ming wuluta, a futata je  
wo la a ko "A ba fala. Hani,  
a t'a fala."  
Wo ka ye ko "i ning ila molu  
ka mune diyamo ?"  
A ka ye ko "ni ite ye sunjo  
kilingo bondi nying bato kono,  
a t'a fa la."  
Wo ka ye ko "bato da yele."  
A ye bato da yele.  
Siyo a ye nono ke bato kono  
fo a fata.  
A y'a da sorong.

A tambita. A futata miniyango be  
dameng, a ye bong jango kuntu,  
a b'a fo la "A t'a sila, Hani,  
a b'a sila."  
Miniyang k'a ye  
"ite ning ila molu ka mune diyamo ?"  
A k'a ye ko  
"ning nga nying bongo landi ite  
i la bongo kang,  
nga i kara fulo be siti bongo  
bala, ite wo si la jangola.  
Miniyang k'a ye bongo landi.  
A ye bongo landi.  
Miniyango a ye la bongo kang.  
Sango ye miniyango siti bongo bala.  
A ye cika ala kungo to.  
A tambita.

THE HARE'S CUNNING

Hare went to his master God.  
He said "I have come to look for cunning."  
God replied to him "You should look for  
weaver birds for me - a gourdful, and buffalo  
milk, that also a gourdful. And a live python.  
And a live hyaena.  
You should bring me those."  
Hare went and looked for two gourds.  
He went to where the weaver birds were.  
When he reached there,  
he kept saying "It will fill it. No, it  
will not fill it."  
The weaver birds said to him  
"What are you and your people talking about ?"  
He said to them "If I open the mouth of the  
gourd, and you enter there,  
you won't be able to fill it."  
They told him to open the mouth.  
The birds went in until it was full.  
He closed the mouth. He went on.

A buffalo which had given birth, he reached  
there, and said to her "It will fill it. No,  
it will not fill it."  
She asked him "What are you and your people  
talking about ?"  
He said to her "If you milk one teat  
into this gourd,  
it will not fill it."  
She said to him "Open the mouth of the gourd."  
He opened the mouth of the gourd.  
The buffalo put milk in the gourd  
until it was full.  
He closed its mouth.

He passed along. He reached where the python  
was, he cut a long bamboo,  
and kept saying "It will not be enough. No,  
it will be enough."  
The python asked him  
"You and your people, what are you talking  
about ?" He said to him  
"If I put down this bamboo, and you lie on it,  
and I tie the two sides (ends ?)  
you will not be as long.  
The python said he should put down the bamboo.  
He put it down.  
The python lay on the bamboo.  
The hare tied the python to the bamboo.  
He picked it up and put it on his head.  
He went on.

A futata suluo be dameng.  
 A ko "he, m mang suluo je."  
 A ko "mari o Ala jita sada bola,  
 m mang suluo je."  
 Suluo a ye wo moyi.  
 A nata funti nyamo kono.  
 A k'a ye "m fele."  
 Suluo k'a ye "na nga miniyango  
 samba i ye. N si ta mariyo ya  
 sadabo dula."  
 Kabiring i jita sango be donkilo la.  
 A ko Mari Alla,  
 "ite le ma fo bang ?  
 Ko nga na samba kacolu batafa.  
 wo fele Mari. "  
 A k'a ye "ite le ma fo bang ?"  
 Ko nga na samba siyo nono batafa.  
 Siyo nono batafa fele Mari."  
 A k'a ye "ite le ma fo bang ?  
 I ko nga na samba miniyang kendo.  
 Miniyang kendo fele Mari."  
 A ko ye " ite le ma fo bang ?  
 I ko nga na samba ohung kendo.  
 Ohung kendo fele Mari."  
 Bitung Mari y'a nyininka  
 a k'a"ye nyino soto nya di le ?"  
 Sango y'a soto nya f'a ye.  
 Alla k'a ye ko  
 "Ta, nyamengo ming be la  
 ning nga do lafa je,  
 i si hadama dingolu fana muta.

(Anon.)

He went to where the hyaena was.  
 He said "Hey, I don't see the hyaena."  
 He said "Lord God is going to prepare a  
 charity, I do not see hyaena."  
 The hyaena heard that.  
 He came out of the grass.  
 He said to him "Here I am."  
 Hyaena said "Let me carry the python for  
 you. We shall go to the master's charity  
 giving place.  
 When they left the hare was singing.  
 He said to Lord God,  
 "Didn't you say it ?  
 That I should bring a gourd of weaver birds  
 Here it is Master."  
 He said "Didn't you say it ?"  
 That I should bring a gourd of buffalo milk.  
 Here is a gourd of buffalo milk, Master.  
 He said "Didn't you say it ?  
 You said I should bring a live python.  
 Here is a live python, Master."  
 He said "Didn't you say it ?  
 You said I should bring a live ohung (hyaena)  
 Here is a live ohung."  
 Then God asked him, and said  
 "How did you get these things ?"  
 The hare told him the way.  
 God said to him  
 "Go away, the cunning which you have  
 if I add to it,  
 you will also catch human beings.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

A version was published in Kibaro: October-December 1955, p.4

Source: Unknown. No date, no author given.  
Perhaps from the materials of the Nutrition Field Working Party,  
Jenyer, Kiang, c. 1948.

(10)

The Clever Child

Keba kiling ne mu,  
a la ninsi yero wuluta kore kono.  
A k'a be ta mo le nyinila,  
ming ya no diyamola,  
a si wo yere di wo mari la.  
A futata sate do to.  
Wolu k'a ye tambi nyato.  
A futata sate do to,  
a ye dindingo tara sate kene kono.  
A k'a ye "Dindingo, i be mune la  
jang ?"  
A k'a ye "Keba, nte kiling be  
kotondi kantola.  
M be konoma kantola.  
M be ting kantola."  
A k'a ye "Nte kiling be wereng  
kantola."  
A k'a ye "Dindingo m me la nying  
kumo long."  
Dindingo k'a ye "M be kotondi  
kantola;  
dolu konomata, i mang wulu folo.  
dolu be wulula;  
Dolu wuluta, bari i mang si kati la  
folo.

A k'a ye nte kiling be kucoling  
kantola.  
Nte kiling tato n ka lo fana nyini.  
Keba k'a ye ko "Ila kumo mu tonya ti."

A k'a ye "Dinding, ite ning juma le  
be jang ?"  
Dinding k'a ye ko "Nte ning na  
baring ne be jang ."  
Keba k'a ye "I baring le dung ?"  
Dindingo k'a ye "A tata sila  
sutiya ndola."  
Keba k'a ye ko "Ila wo kumo mu  
mune ti dung ?"  
A k'a ye "A tata silo dada,  
katu n'a dadata a buka jamfa."

Keba k'a ye ko: "Ila wo kumo mu  
tonya le ti."

There was (once) a man,  
his heifer gave birth in the herd.  
He said he would go and look for a person,  
who was better than he at talking,  
and would give the heifer to that one.  
He reached a certain village.  
They told him to go on ahead.  
He reached another village,  
and met a child in the open area beside it.  
He asked him "Child, what are you doing here ?"

He said to him "Old man. I alone am guarding  
the cotton.  
I am guarding pregnant ones.  
I am guarding those in childbirth."  
He said "I alone am guarding the ..... ?"

The old man said "Child, I do not follow  
your meaning."  
The child said "I am guarding the cotton;

Some (plants) are about to bear, but have  
not borne yet; others are bearing;  
Others have produced cotton, but are not ready  
for picking.

He said to him "I alone am guarding .....  
I alone on going also look for firewood.  
The old man said to him "Your explanation is  
the truth."

He said to him "Child, you and who else are  
here ?"  
The child replied "I and my uncle are here."

The elder said "Where is your uncle ?"  
The child replied "He has gone to shorten  
the road."  
The elder said to him "What do you mean ?"

The child) said "He went to fix the path,  
because when it is fixed (weeded), it is not  
far."

The elder said to him "Your explanation is  
the truth."

Keba k'a ye ko "Musu jelu le be i baring bulu ?"  
 A k'a ye "Musu saba le b'a bulu."  
 A k'a ye "Do be jahanama safarila. Do be arajana dokuwo la m baring ya. Do wo tata ke fula kelendola."  
 A k'a ye "Dinding, m me ila nying kumo long."  
 A k'a ye "Keba, ming be jahanama safarola, wo ka ta wandi musolu kili sate kono, i ning mbaring ka kanyama ke."  
 A ko "Ming be arajana safarola, wo be mbaring topato la, a be ala dimbaya topato la, a b'a la luntangolu topato la."  
 A k'a ye "Ming tata ke fula kelendola."  
 A k'a ye a jita mbaring na fengolu ku, a tata sate kono, a y'a la kanyamolu la fanolu ta. a ye bula kuru fengolu kono."  
 A k'a ye "Ni mbaring y'a long, a ning wo keolu be kelela."  
 Keba k'a ye "Ila wo kumo fana tonya le mu."

Keba k'a ye "Dinding ta dimba bi n ye."  
 Dindingo tata, a meta je.  
 A nata.  
 Keba k'a ye "Dinding, bari i meta !"

A k'a ye "Nga tara dimba ye dondiko dung."  
 Keba k'a ye "Bari m mang ila nying kumo long."  
 A k'a ye "Suntukungo to dimba ming be je, a santo bee sata, fo dimba (ming) be duma."  
 A k'a ye "Woleyatina n ko dimba ye dondiko dung."  
 Keba k'a ye "Ila wo kumo mu tonya le ti."

Keba k'a ye "Dinding, ta jio bi n ye."  
 Dindingo tata, a meta je.  
 A nata.  
 A k'a ye "Dinding, bari i meta."  
 A k'a ye "Keba, nga tara serung jio ning nyinang jio nyamita."  
 A k'a ye "Bari m me la kumo long."  
 A k'a ye "Nga tara ji kurungo ning ji nyima nyamita."

The old man asked him "How many wives has your uncle ?"  
 He replied "He has three wives."  
 He said to him "One is selling hell. One is doing heaven's work at my uncle's place. One went to make two men fight."  
 He said "Child, I don't follow your meaning."

The child) said "Old man, the one going round selling hell, goes and calls other people's wives in the town, and they and my uncle make love."

He said "The one who is selling heaven, that one looks after my uncle, she looks after his dependants, she looks after his strangers. "  
 He said "The one that went to make two men fight.

(he said) she left washing my uncle's things, and went into the village and took her lovers' clothes, and put them among the washing."  
 He said "If my uncle were to know it, he and those men would fight."  
 The old man said to him "Your explanation is also the truth."

The old man said "Child go and fetch fire for me."  
 The child went and was a long time there. He came.  
 The old man said to him "Child, but you were a long time."  
 He replied "I found the fire had put on a garment."  
 The old man said "But I don't understand your meaning."  
 He said "On the rubbish heap, the fire which is there, the top has died down, but there is fire deep down."  
 He said "That is why I said the fire had put on a garment (covering)."  
 The old man replied "Your explanation is the truth."

The old man said "Child, go and fetch water for me."  
 The child went, and was long there. He came back.  
 The old man said "Child, you were long !"  
 He replied "Old man, I found last year's water and this year's water mixed up."  
 He said to him "But I don't follow your meaning."  
 He said "I found old water and fresh water mixed up."

Dindingo k'a ye "Keba, nga tara  
nying sate molu be dimba fala."  
A k'a ye "Dinding, bari m me  
ila wo kuo long."  
A k'a ye "Keba, nga tara le mo  
kiling be nyantang bungo santo  
a be bungo tibala,  
a ye tabanda mutandi,  
a b'a saba la."  
A k'a ye ko "Y'a long,  
wo mari a ye dimba bondi la."

Keba ka dindingo ye ko  
"M be yero di la ite la,  
katu ite ye diyamo no le."  
A ye ninso di a la.  
Dindingo ye ninso samba.  
A y'a karafa kore do to.  
Saing ninso wuluta,  
a baring nata tura samba nang,  
ye bula nyo kang fo ninso wuluta,  
fo a ye kore si.  
Dindingo ko a lafita ta si la a ya.

A k'a be ninsolu samba la.  
A baring ko a la tura le ye wo  
ninsolu wulu.

Dindingo tata a la suo kono,  
fo duntungolu kumata,  
a ye terango cika,  
a tata a baring ya,  
Yiri meng be luwo tema,  
a y'a sei terango la.  
A baring ko "Juma le mu ?"  
A k'a ye "Nte le mu."  
A k'a ye "Kori i nya mang ma,  
i ka mune sei ?"  
A k'a ye "N fa wuluta,  
n nata wo le jiba lo nyino la."  
A baring k'a ye "Kori i nya mang ma,  
i nene ya je ke wuluta ?"  
A k'a ye "Woto na ninsolu di n na."  
katu ite ko ke buka wulu."

The child said to him "Old man, I met  
the people of the town putting out a fire."  
He said to him "Child, but I don't  
understand your meaning."  
He said to him "Old man, I found  
one person was on top of a thatched house,  
he was thatching the house,  
he lit his pipe,  
and was smoking it."  
He said to him "You know,  
that person has made the fire go out."

The old man said to the child  
"It is to you I will give this cow,  
because you are good at talking."  
He gave him the cow.  
The child took the cow away.  
He kept it in another herd.  
Now the cow gave birth,  
his uncle happened to bring a bull,  
they left them together until his cow had  
given birth, enough to make a herd.  
The child said he wanted to go and stay at  
his own place.  
He wanted to take away the cows.  
His uncle said his bull had given birth to  
those cows (calves).

The child went to his home,  
until cock-crow,  
he picked up an ax,  
and went to his uncle's.  
the tree that was in the middle of the compound,  
he struck it with his ax.  
His uncle asked "Who is it ?"  
He replied "It is I."  
He said "I hope you are not crazy,  
what are you cutting ?"  
He replied "My father gave birth,  
I came to look for the wood for the birth-fire."  
His uncle said "I hope you are not crazy,  
when did you ever see a man give birth ?"  
He said to him "Then give me my cows,  
because you say a male cannot give birth."

Source: Jeri Job (A Jola brought up in the Kombo), repeating what had been told to him by Keba Dafe, from Jokadu.  
Recorded on dictaphone, August 1951.

(11) SIMAYA BOROTHE MEDICINE FOR LONG LIFE

a ko ni suo kuta bake,  
kana tama,  
wo bee mu simaya bori le ti.  
a ko ning tilo lota kunto,  
kana tama.  
wo bee mu simaya boro le ti.  
a ko yiro mem jamfata,  
kana sele a la.  
wo bee mu simaya bori le ti.  
keba meng siata i ti,  
kana a neng,  
wo bee mu simaya bori le ti.  
i koto fulango, kana neng,  
wo bee mu simaya bori le ti.

He said "In the middle of the night,  
don't travel around,  
all that is medicine for long life."  
He said "When the sun is overhead,  
don't travel around,  
all that is medicine for long life."  
He said "A tree that is tall,  
don't climb up it,  
all that is medicine for long life.  
A man that is older than you.  
don't curse him  
all that is medicine for long life.  
Your elder brother, don't curse him,  
all that is medicine for long life."

a banta, a dango bee mu wo le ti.

It is finished, that's all.

-----

Keba Dafe, from Jokadu, dictated the following version:

Dinding, na nang,  
nga simaya bori fo i ye,  
yiri meng jangayata,  
kana sele a la.  
ji meng siata,  
kana bula a la.  
suto ba tampering,  
a te song na ta la.  
tilibulo ba tampering,  
a te song na ta la.  
keba meng siata i ti,  
kana a neng.  
lonna la muso, a te song na kanu la,  
katuko a si i ning jinol' fai  
nyo kang.  
wo bee mu simaya bori le ti.

Child, come here,  
so that I may tell you the medicine for long  
life, a tree that is tall,  
don't climb it.  
Water that is wide,  
don't embark on it.  
In the middle of the night,  
he will not agree to go.  
In the middle of the day,  
he will not agree to go.  
An elder who is older than you,  
don't curse him.  
a learned man's wife, he will not agree to  
make love to her,  
because he will turn the evil spirits on to  
you.  
These are all medicines for long life.

Recorded on a dictaphone at Fajara, Kombo St.Mary, 1952  
from Usman Bajo of Gunjur.

(12) Tankongo aning nyankonkorongoThe hartebeeste and the chameleon

Subol' bee benta. I ko i be muso  
di keo la, meng si bori no,  
meng folo futata muso la,  
a si muso ta.  
Tankongo, wo le mu subo borila ti,  
  
subo mi y'a long kat,  
a ye boro no wulo kono subo bee ti.  
Nyankonkorongo a buka bori,  
a man taria tamola,  
bari a ye fero soto  
men s'a tinna a si muso (samba ?) la.

Ye muso londi, ye tankongo siti,  
  
subo bee borita,  
i be muso waling na,  
nyankonkorongo man boro no,  
a nata mining,  
a ye tankong firing,  
a denta tankongo karo to,  
ning tankong borita,  
ni be na futa la subo-o-subo la,  
a b'a fo la:

1

"Tankong ye, tankong ye  
kumparere, juma le ye tankong bula ?  
kumparere, juma le be karo to ?  
kumparere, "

Tankong be buri la,  
a be tambila subo bee la,  
f'a be na futala musu la dula la.

I be na futa la muso la tembo men na,

nyankonkorongo saunta,  
a danta muso la,  
jan ning tankong futata muso la.  
Tankong fota muso la,  
wo le y'a tinna,  
nyankonkorong(ko)fero nyong t'a la.  
la ?

The animals all met. They said they would  
give a wife to the man who could run best.  
The first one to reach the woman,  
should take her.  
The hartebeeste, that was the (greatest)  
runner of the animals,  
an animal that you should know,  
could outrun all the wild animals.  
The chameleon could not run,  
he did not hurry in moving,  
but he had a plan  
by which he would take the woman.

They set down the woman, and tied the  
hartebeeste,  
and all the animals set off running,  
and were getting near the woman,  
the chameleon could not run,  
he came and turned round,  
and set the hartebeeste free,  
he clung to the side of the hartebeeste,  
when the hartebeeste ran  
as they reached each animal,  
he would sing:

Tankong (Hartebeeste), tankong,  
kumparere, who freed the hartebeeste ?  
kumparere, who is on (his ) side ?

The hartebeeste was running ,  
and was passing all the animals,  
until they were about to reach the woman's  
place.  
When they were about to reach level with the  
woman,  
the chameleon jumped off,  
and reached the woman,  
before the hartebeeste reached her.  
The hartebeeste lost the woman,  
that is why  
the chameleon's cunning, there is nothing like  
it.

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

1. From the notes it is not clear whether the words 'Tankong ye' go with the last part of the previous sentence i.e. singing to the hartebeeste, or whether they form the first line of the song. As the words tankong ye ,or tankong nye, were repeated, they would seem to be part of the song.



Recorded on a dictaphone at Fajara, Kombo St.Mary, 1952

from Usman Bajo of Gunjur. (Kombo)

(13) Suluo ning ba kotongo a ning sango

Suluo ning ba kotongo a ning sango,  
wol' le be teriya la.  
Suluo ka ta wulo kono,  
a ka ta, a ka jata dingolu sunya,  
a kal' i domo.  
Sang a ma long,  
bari ni sulu be ta,  
ba kotong kal' a noma,  
wo si ta tomborong koto,  
a be tomborong domo la,  
a be suluo jibe la,  
ning sulu tata a ka jata dingol'  
sunya, a ye ta, a y'a domo.

Sang nata suo kono,  
jata y'a nyininka .  
"A,"a ko, "nte de, m mang mo je  
mem b'a ke la,  
bar' nga mira sulu , wo le kal'  
i dingol' sunya, katung sulu mo  
kurung ne mu."

Sang tata a ye ba-kotongo nyininka,  
ba kotongo y'a f'a ye.  
A y'a fo jato ye.  
Suluo borita, a dunta wulo kono,  
a buka song na la sei la suo kono,  
katu a ye kuriya ke.

Ba-kotongo tata wulo kono,  
a be domoro la,  
sulu nata a y'a nyente, a y'a muta,  
a k'a ye ko, "ite jankading,  
ju yelering, sunkanding,  
ite le tata fo (sang) ye ko  
nte le nga koto jata dingolu muta,

n kal'i domo,  
bari m be i domo la dameng bi,  
si te futa la wo to.  
A ye ba-kotong muta, a n a tata,  
i tembita bolongo la,  
a k'a be ba-kotong domo la,  
siol' kumata a dala,  
a k'a ye, "nga ta, n te domo la jang.  
siol' le be jan ne."  
I tata fo nyato tukung,  
a k'a b'a domo la,  
a ye mol' makang moi,  
a k'a ye "Nga ta, n te domo la  
jang fanang, mol' le be jang ne."

The hyaena and the goat and the hare

The hyaena and the goat and the hare,  
were once friends.  
Hyaena used to go in the bush,  
he would go and steal lion's children,  
and eat them.  
Hare did not know it,  
but when hyaena was going,  
billy-goat used to follow him,  
and would go under a tomborong tree,  
and eat tomborong fruit,  
and watch hyaena,  
when he went and stole lion's children  
and went off and ate them.

Hare came home,  
lion asked him. (He replied)  
"Ah," he said , "As for me, I have not  
seen anyone do it,  
but I think it is hyaena that is  
stealing your children, because hyaena  
is a very wicked person."

Hare went and asked billy-goat,  
billy-goat told him.  
(Hare) went and told lion.  
Hyaena ran off and went into the bush,  
he did not agree to come and return home,  
because he had done wickedness.

Billy-goat went into the bush,  
he was eating,  
hyaena came and stalked him, and caught him,  
and said to him, "You little bastard,  
open-backside, stinking,..  
you went and told (hare)  
that it was I who caught elder brother lion's  
children,  
and ate them,  
but where I will eat you today,  
(even) flies will not reach there.  
He seized goat and went with him,  
they crossed the river,  
and was about the eat goat,  
flies buzzed beside him,  
He said to him "Let us go, I won't eat you  
here. There are flies here."  
They went ahead again,  
he was about to eat him,  
he heard the noise of people,  
He said to him "Let us go on, I shan't eat  
you here also, people are here."

I tata, i tata, i tata  
fo i futata jata la..

I be futa la jata la tumameng,  
ba-kotong wurita.  
Suluo k'a ye ko "hani ni i si  
wuri, mo te i kang moi la jang.  
Mo te jang fo nte n ite damma.  
Jata ye ba kotong wuri kango moi,  
a nata f'a futata i la.  
Sulu k'a ye ko "Ah, koto jata,  
n nata ite le kontong.  
Nga moi i dingolu kuranta le.  
N nata i kontong.  
N nata nying ba samba i ye,  
fo i s'a fa i ni(ng) dindingolu ye,  
  
y'a da nyining a la,

Jata ye i samba, i tata,  
i tata dindingol'le jube,  
y'a tara dindingo nya be dimin na.  
Jato wo wato a batata,  
dindingo la (kuo ? kuia ?) y'a deu.  
A mam bori soto,  
a be i jara la minna,  
A ye sulu nyininka, a ko sulu ye ko,  
"N lafita ye ku kiling ke n ye.  
Ni y'a long ko a be n deuning."  
A k'a ye ko "Mune mu ?"  
A k'a ye "N dingo la nya be dimin na.  
M mang bori soto.  
Fo ite si boro long,  
i si i nya jara minna."  
Suluo k'a ye: "Ha. Nte mam bori ku  
long, bari i si ba kotong nyininka,  
katung ba kotong ka tama.  
A ka wulo kono dema,  
a ka/suo kono fana /ta  
Ye ba kotong nyininka.  
Ba kotong ko "Ha, nte nga boro long,  
bari wo boro, a be jang fango le to."

Wo tumo la, sulu sobita,  
a y'a long ko ba kotong b'a fo la  
ko boro be ate suluo fango la bala  
jato bala.  
Suluo ye a la fano be ke buo ti.  
Jato k'a ye ko "Sulu mune mu ?"  
A ko "Fen ti."  
Jato ko ba kotong ye  
"Saing n lafita ye wo boro fo n ye."  
A k'a ye "A boro ning nga fo i ye,  
i be m bula la ?"  
A ko "Ha, ni i y'a fo, n te fa la,

They went on, and on, and on,  
until they reached the lion.

When they reached the lion,  
goat cried out.  
Hyaena said to him "Even if you cry out,  
no one will hear your voice here.  
No one is here except for you and me.  
But lion heard the sound of goat's shouting,  
and came until he reached them.  
Hyaena said to him "Ah, brother lion,  
It was you I am coming to greet.  
I heard your children were sick.  
I came to greet them.(you ?)  
I brought this goat for them, (you ?)  
you that you should kill it for yourself  
and the children.  
to feed on.

Lion took them, and they went,  
they went to look at the children,  
and found the child's eye was paining.  
Lion at that time was worn out,  
the child's (trouble) had puzzled him.  
He had no medicine,  
to cure them with.  
He asked hyaena, and said  
"I want you to do one thing for me.  
If you know that one thing is puzzling me."  
He asked him "What is it ?"  
He replied " My child's eye is paining him.  
I have no medicine.  
Perhaps you know medicine,  
with which to cure his eyes."  
Hyaena said to him : " Yes, I do not know  
about medicines, but you should ask billy-  
goat because goat travels around.  
He hunts in the bush,  
he goes to the village also.  
They asked goat.  
Goat said "Yes, I know about medicines,  
but that medicines, it is right here."

At that time, hyaena became suspicious,  
he knew that goat was going to say  
the medicine was on hyaena's own body.

Hyaena shit in his cloth.  
Lion asked him "Hyaena, what is the matter ?"  
He replied "It is nothing."  
Lion said to goat  
"Now I want you to tell me that medicine."  
He said to (lion) "The medicine for it, if  
I tell you, will you let me go ?"  
He said "If you tell it, I will not kill you,

m be i bula la i ye ta."  
 Ba kotong ko jato ye ko,  
 "Nya diming boro suluo keba  
 berekili faso le mu. "  
 Ye suluo muta, y'a berekili faso bo.

I am going to let you go."  
 Goat said to lion,  
 "The medicine for sore eyes is a big hyaena's  
 testicle sinews." (veins ?)  
 They caught hyaena, and took his testicle  
 sinews.

Jata y'a di a dingol'la, y'a nyimi,  
 i nya kendiata.

Lion gave it to his children, they chewed it,  
 their eyes were cured.

Suluo, wo fata.  
 Ye ba kotong bula.  
 Wo le y'a tinna suluo ko,  
 'Ning kuo fota dameng, a ye bang  
 wo to, jan ning ku koteng kal'a  
 singo bula je.'

As for hyaena he died.  
 They released goat.  
 That is why hyaena says  
 "If something is lost, let it stop there,  
 before something else intervenes."

(Leave well alone)

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

From the transcription it is difficult to tell whether there were several children with sore eyes or only one. The narrator seems to switch between singular and plural forms. The Lion seems to be masculine, rather than a lioness.

Source: Recorded at Fajara, Kombo St. Mary, 1952, on dictaphone, from  
Usman Bajo of Kunjur (Kombo).

(14) SISEO NING WOLOTHE HEN AND THE BUSH-FOWL

Suseo, an a na sateo kono,  
m be na wo fo la saing.  
Suseo mu wulo kono subo le ti.  
Ni i y'a long ko a ye tio no,  
a ning wolo le be teriya la,  
a ning kame a ning buro.  
Bari sise ning buro i mang jamfa  
nyo la, i bee be ba da la.

Mi ye suseo samba suo kono,  
malo le mu.  
Wo malo m be na wo fo la i ye.  
Wolof a ning suse be teriya la,  
bari a mang lafi suseo la.  
N'a tata wolo ya, i si kuo bee ke la,  
i be jele la,  
i be ta tiyo wuri la,  
ye ku bee ke la.  
Wo wato siseo ye tio no wolo ti.  
Wolo a mang lafi suseo la.

Wolo ka ta bambo la kilo sunya,  
a ka ta a mabo.  
N'ate y'a sunya  
.....ka ta a faling... (obscure)

Kuo be na finti la wati ming,  
ye i bee kili ye i nyininka.  
Wolo ko "Suse le ka kilo sunya."  
I ko saing i si batu,  
ni bee ye kilo tei, i s'a long.  
ni ye bambo la kilo sunya.  
Kili te wato sita,  
wolo tata, a ye kilo sunya,  
a nata a ke siseo la kilo koto,  
....  
Sise ye kilo tei,  
a la kilo keta bamba dingo ti.  
Wo bamba dingo wo keta kaanaa ti,  
a mang ke bambo piri ti.  
Suseo le y'a tei.

Ye suseo muta, k'ate le ye kilo  
sunya. Y'a muta, y'a siti,  
a mang ti no.  
A be wo siti wo jauwiya la,  
fo tili dantang, y'a bula,  
Wo malo, wo le suse borindi,  
a keta suo kono subo ti.

The hen, and its coming into the village,  
I am going to tell that now.  
The hen was once a wild animal.  
You should know that she could fly,  
and was friends with the bush-fowl,  
and the guinea-fowl, and the wild-duck.  
But the hen and the duck were not far  
from each other, they were beside the river.

What made the hen become a domestic animal  
it was shame.  
That shame I am going to tell you.  
The bush-fowl and the hen were friends,  
but she did not like the hen.  
if hen went to bush-fowl, they would do every-  
thing, they would laugh,  
they would go and dig up groundnuts,  
they would do everything.  
At that time hen could fly better than bush-fowl.  
So, bush-fowl did not like hen.

Bush-fowl went and stole a crocodile's egg,  
and went and kept it.  
When she stole it  
....she exchanged it for... (obscure)

When the matter surfaced  
they were all called together and asked.  
Bush-fowl said "It was hen that stole the egg."  
They said they should wait,  
when all had hatched their eggs, they would know  
if crocodile's egg had been stolen.  
when the egg hatching time came,  
bush fowl went and stole an egg,  
and came and put it among hen's eggs..

Hen hatched her eggs,  
her egg produced a baby crocodile.  
That baby crocodile became a monitor lizard,  
it was not a pure crocodile  
because hen hatched it.

They arrested hen, for stealing the egg.  
They arrested her and tied her up,  
she could not fly.  
She was tied up for that crime  
for some days, and then let go.  
the shame of that made then hen run away,  
and became a domestic animal.

Wo le y'a tinna...  
suse a ning wolo ye nyo kong  
biring duniya lo waato,  
jan ning duniya be na (bang ?) na.

That is why....  
hen and bush fowl hate each other  
since the world began  
and the end of the world.

Source: Transcribed from a dictaphone recording at Fajara, Kombo St. Mary, 1952, from Usman Bajo of Gunjur (Kombo).

(15)

Hare destroys other animals

M be na suluo ning sang a ning wolo, a ning jata, a ning sama ning saji kotongo, aning sulo, m be na wol'le la kumo fo la.

Suluo ning Sang ning Jata ning Sama ye i la sate lo, kaira sateringo. Suluo ko Sang te sate tei la no.

Ye sang ning sulo ki ji bio la. A ning sulo tata ji bio la, a ko sulo ye ko i fenyo kaba jamfata, m be i muta i fenyo to, nga jio bi. Sang ye sula muta a fenyo to, a ye sulo yoro kolong kono, sulo ye jio bi, a ye sang na julo fandi. Sulo a ning a julo tuta, a ye sulo yoro kotenke, a ye sulo bula, wo kanata kolong kono, wo fata. A tata, jata y'a nyininka, a k'a ye "Sula le ?" A k'a ye "Sula fenyo kaba le jamfata, jan ning n ka julo ta, ng'ate yoro, a ye jio bi, a ye jio bi n ye, a kanata, a boita kolong kono, wo fata."

Ye sang ning ba kotongo ki lo nyino la. A ko ba kotongo ye ko (N karo bambanta) m be nying yiro boi la, m b'a samba la. Janning a (b'a ke la) ba-kotong borita a ye yiro taki, a kungo farata. Sang y'a la lo siti, a y'a samba, jata y'a nyininka, a k'a ye "Ba-kotongo le ?"

I am going to tell about Hyaena and Hare and Bush-fowl, and Lion, and Elephant, and Ram, and Monkey.. it is their story I am going to tell.

Hyaena and Hare and Lion and Elephant had set up their town, a town of peace. Hyaena said that Hare could not break up the town.

They sent Hare and Monkey to draw water. He went off with Monkey to draw water, he said to Monkey, your tail is long, I am going to hold you by your tail, to draw water. Hare caught hold of Monkey's tail, and let Monkey down into the well, the Monkey drew water, and filled Hare's bucket. The monkey and his bucket remained, he let down Monkey again, but let go of him, and he fell down the well and died. He went back, Lion asked him, saying "Where is Monkey ?" He replied "Monkey's tail was long before I could use a rope, I let him down to draw water, he drew water for me, but slipped out, and fell down the well, and died."

They sent Hare and Billy-Goat to look for firewood. He said to Billy-goat (My side is strong) I am going to knock over this tree, and carry it back. Before (he could do it) Billy-goat ran, and struck the tree, and split his head open. Hare tied up the wood, and carried it back, Lion asked him, and said "Where is Billy-goat ?"

A k'a ye 'wo ko ala kungo le  
bambanta,  
a te terango ta la  
n'a si yiro kuntu,  
a b'a junku la a kungo la.  
a ye yiro junku,  
a kungo teita, a ye wo fa.

Sama y'a ki, a k'a y'a li.  
A be sama kungo li la,  
...a ye sama kanatei  
a ye wo fa.

Y'a ning suluo ki,  
i ko ye ta demo la.  
Ye subo nyini,  
i mang subo soto.  
Ye nyamo je,  
a ye suluo dundi je,  
a k'a ye "Ni i ye dung je,  
i be subo muta la.  
Suluo dunta wo nyamo kono,  
jan ning a be funti la,  
sang ye almeto ta, a ye nyamo mala,  
wo fata.

Ye a ning wolo ki,  
i ko ye ta dimba bi.  
A ning wolo tata dimba bio la.  
A ko wo le ye ko,  
"I kampang warata nyameng ye  
tio no,  
ni ye wo no,  
m be dimba binyako la kampang  
kang nga ti, alinga ta."  
Wolo k'a ye "I tulo fato warata,  
wo le nya ma m be dimba ke i tulo  
kono, nga bori (1)  
Sang ye dimba bi saringo ta,  
y'a wo bula a tulo kono,  
a borita,  
wolo ye dimba binyako ta,  
a y'a la a kampang kang,  
an a tata.  
Wolo janita,  
sang a ye wo fanang fa.  
Ate mininta, a ye yiri fato ta,  
a ye dimba binyako bula je,  
a ye wo samba, ye dimba mala,  
Jata y'a nyininka, a k'a ye  
"Wolo le ?"

(1) *Bush fowl is a clever animal, and sees through Hare's plan, but is not clever enough in this case.*

He said 'He said his head was hard,  
he would not take an ax  
to cut the tree,  
he would strike it with his head.  
he struck the tree,  
his head was broken open, and it killed him.

Elephant sent him to shave him.  
After shaving the elephant's head,  
he cut the elephant's throat,  
and killed that one.

They sent him and hyaena  
to go hunting.  
They looked for meat,  
they did not get any.  
They saw long grass,  
he made hyaena go in there,  
He said "If you go in there,  
you will catch an animal."  
Hyaena went into the long grass,  
before he could come out,  
hare took matches and lit the grass,  
he (hyaena) died.

They sent him and Bush-fowl  
to fetch fire.  
He and Bush-fowl went to fetch the fire.  
He said to Bush-fowl,  
"Your wings are big and you are good at  
flying,  
if you are able,  
I shall put the embers on your wings  
so that we can fly back."  
Bush-fowl said to him "Your ears are long,  
in like manner I shall put the fire in your  
ears and we will run back."  
Hare picked up dead embers,  
and put those in his ears,  
and ran off,  
Bush-fowl took live embers,  
and put them on his wings,  
and went off with them.  
Bush fowl was burnt,  
Hare had killed that one too.  
He turned back, picked up a piece of bark,  
put the live embers there,  
and carried it back and lit the fire.  
Lion asked him, and said  
"Where is Bush-fowl ?"

A k'a ye ko "Wo ko a la kampango  
warata, a ye tio no,  
a ye dimba la a kang,  
a janita, ate fata.  
Saing a tuta jato afango la.

Jata y'a muta, a ko 'i dei,  
ye na kaira sate y'a bee tei.  
Saing m be i fa la.  
Jato y'a muta, a k'a b'a kantei la,

A k'a ye "Kana n kanatei  
(ni mang ke misilme kanateinya)  
Jata k'a ye ko  
"I k'a ke nyadi le ?"  
A ko "Nga a yitandi i la."  
Jato ye la,  
a k'a be wo yitandi jato le,  
a ye jato kanatei,  
wo fanang fata.

Sang ye sateringo ta.  
a keta je mansa ti.

He said to him "He said his wings were  
large, he could fly,  
he put the fire on them,  
but was burnt and died.  
There remained Lion himself.

Lion caught him, and said 'Be quiet,  
you've broken up my peaceful town.  
Now I'm going to kill you.  
Lion took hold of him, and was about to  
cut his throat.

He said "Do not cut my throat  
(if you don't do it in the Muslim way)  
Lion said to him  
"How do you do it ?"  
He said "Let me show it to you."  
Lion lay down,  
he pretended to show Lion,  
but cut his throat,  
and he too died.

Hare took possession of the town,  
and became the King there.

(Translated by David P. Gamble)



Recorded at Keneba, Western Kiang, on tape, June 1963

Told by : Jenaba Darame (adult woman)

(16)

THE LAIBO<sup>1</sup>

ntaling-ntaling.

(Reply by listeners: njamme)

Ko Laibe le lai,  
a be kunang kankula la,  
ni musol' k'a ye  
"Ila nying kunang songo du ?"  
a k'a ye ko "Fo laarango."  
Bitung a tata, a tata,  
a ye korda fula tambi,  
a futata sabanjango ma,  
wo mu mansa la korda ti.  
A ye mansa la musunding ju jara  
kiling tara je.  
A k'a ye "i la nying kunang songo  
du ?"  
A k'a ye ko "Fo laarango."  
A k'a ye "Nganga ta."  
An a tata, i dunta bungo kono,  
i be je, i be je.  
A ye mansa makango moi, i be na,  
a ko:

"m bula, m bula, m bula, m bula,  
tamandingol' moi kuma la,  
susaringolu moi kuma la,  
dabaringo moi kuma la."

"Songo mang bang, kuna(ng),<sup>2</sup>  
Laibo la kunandingo  
a song mam bang kuna(ng)."

Here is a tale.

There was a Laibo ,  
he was selling wooden bowls,  
when women asked him  
"What is the price of your wooden bowl ?"  
he would say "Just bed."  
Then he went on and on,  
he passed two compounds,  
he reached the third,  
that was the king's compound.  
He met one of the king's little wives  
with a thin backside there.  
She asked him "What is the price of your  
wooden bowl ?"  
He said to her "Just bed."  
She said to him "Let us go."  
He went with her, they went into the house,  
they were there (a long time).  
She heard the sound of the king, they were  
coming back, and she sang:

"Leave me, leave me, leave me, leave me,  
listen to the drums sounding,  
listen to the fiddles playing,  
listen to the chief's drum sounding."

"The price has not been reached yet,  
the Laibo's little wooden bowl,  
its price is not finished yet."

(Translated by D.P.Gamble)

1. The Laibo (In Fula the singular is Labbo, the plural Laube) are a Fula-speaking woodworking group who travel around carving and selling wooden objects - mortars, pestles, wooden bowls, wooden spoons, etc.
2. The second part of the song is sung with a deeper voice- the Laibo's reply.
3. A French translation of a Wolof version of this story is given in Jean Copans et Philippe Couty: Contes Wolof du Baol, Dakar (ORSTOM), 1968, pp. 65-66.
4. A copy of the tape is available in the Gambian Cultural Archives, Banjul.

Recorded at Keneba, Western Kiang, on tape, December 1965

Told by: (adult woman)

(17) Sulu ning sango a ning jata

Hyaena and hare and lion

Ntaling-ntaling.

(Reply by listeners: njamme)

Here is a tale.

Sulu ning sango a ning jata,  
i ko i tata sama maneo la.  
I samamaneta,  
ye buntungo fa nyo la,  
buntung fula.  
I ko i kumata "alinga janjang,  
m bee ye ta tilikandi tamo la,  
ning sama sita, n s'a domo."

Hyaena and hare and lion,  
they say they went as strange farmers.<sup>1</sup>  
They spent the rainy season away,  
they filled a store-house with millet,  
two store-houses.  
They say they spoke "Let us separate,  
we all should spend the dry season travelling,  
when the rainy season comes, we should eat it."

I ko biring sama<sup>2</sup>sita,  
i bee tata dula jango to,  
do (suluo) tata tilibo.  
I ko sango borita,  
a tata biti fito koto,  
A ye munya, i bee tata tuma meng na,  
a ye nyo buntungo yoronna,  
a y'a bang.  
Biring a y'a bang,  
a ye sulu la buo ko,  
a y'a ke tonkong nano bee,

They say when the rainy season came,  
they all went to far off places,  
one (hyaena) went to the east.  
They say hare ran off,  
and went and hid behind a shrub.  
He waited until they had all gone,  
and emptied the millet store bit by bit,  
and finished it.  
When he had finished it,  
he gathered up hyaena's excrement,  
and put it in all four corners.

I nata meng na,  
i benta sani folo,  
i kumata, (i ko) juma le ye na  
nyo buntungo domo n koma ?"  
Ha, i ko, sango ko "Nte nte,  
nte jamfata, nte tata fo  
Kana-si-manankasi-sito-koto."  
Suluo ko "N tata tilibo le de !"  
I ko i kumata "Suluo le ye nying ke,  
buntungo kono a la buo dama le be je,  
a kola, mo nte."  
A ko "Wollahi nte nte."  
I ko "alinga suluo fa,  
ni kuriya keta suluo le mu."  
Y'a fa dek, i janjanta.

When they came,  
they met at the beginning of the rainy season,  
they exclaimed "Who has eaten our millet-  
store in our absence ?"  
"Hn", they said. Hare said "It was not me,  
I was far away, I went as far as  
Don't-sit-behind-the-manankaso-shrub."  
Hyaena said "I went to the east !"  
They say they said "Hyaena did it,  
in the store-house his excrement alone is there,  
besides him, there was no one."  
He said "In truth, it was not me."  
They said "Let us kill hyaena,  
If wickedness happened it is hyaena."  
They killed him completely, and scattered.

Nga bang ne.

I've finished.

1. A Gambian term for those who leave their home communities to farm elsewhere. (perhaps derived from stranger-farmers).
2. A mistake for tilikando (dry season).
3. A longer version of this tale was written by A.K.Rahman : Mandinka Talingo, 1948, pp. 7-9
4. A copy of the tape is available in the Gambian Cultural Archives, Banjul.
5. A Fula version "Les animaux qui avaient cultivé un même champ." is given in Henri Gaden: Le Poular. Dialecte Peul du Fouta Sénégalais, 1913, pp.236-239.

Both Rahman's account and the Fula version end with an ordeal to determine the guilty person.

cf Mariko, Kélétigui  
Sur les rives du fleuve Niger: Contes Sahéliens.  
Paris: Karthala, 1984. 53-56 (Hausa, 1960)

Source: Story written in English by Ebrima Camara, while at the  
Gambia High School, 1963

(18)

The two friends

Once upon a time there were two friends- a rabbit and a wolf. They lived together in a cave deep in the forest. They used to go hunting and if by chance they killed any beast, they feasted on it. One day the wolf asked the rabbit to go hunting with him and the rabbit agreed.

They set out very early in the morning and hunted all day long when at last they killed a deer. They were both hungry and decided to cook it at once. The rabbit said that he would do it. A fire was soon lit and the meat was boiling. The rabbit asked the wolf to go and plait his hair. The wolf started to plait the rabbit, and when he finished the rabbit started to plait the wolf, but the rabbit was plaiting the wolf's hair to a branch so that the wolf cannot (move). Suddenly the rabbit ran away from the wolf and went to the pot full of beef (meat). He started to eat. Seeing this the wolf tried to move, but couldn't. He shouted at the rabbit to give him his share but the rabbit continued to eat until he cleaned the pot. Then he took the bones, went up to the wolf and knocked his mouth with each. The wolf became so angry that he died. The rabbit went away singing.

This shows that a rabbit is wiser and cleverer than a wolf.

A Wolof version of this story is given in:

L. Senghor & A. Sadji: La belle histoire de Leuk-le-lièvre, pp. 80-81

Source: Story written in English by Babukar Touray, while at the Gambia High School, 1963.

(19) There was once a man who had a very beautiful daughter and of whom he was very proud. Many man came in quest of her, but the father told them that before they marry her they must climb a tree and while climbing he would shoot at them with his bow and arrow. If anybody reaches the top of the tree, (he) would have the girl in marriage.

Several young man died because of the beauty of the girl and the wicked bow and arrow of the father. The father continued doing this until a Jenni happened to hear about it.

He transformed himself into a remarkably handsome man and went to the girl's home. Immediately she saw him, she fell in love with him, and when the father told the man the procedure about climbing the tree he replied that he would do it.

So he took off his clothes and started to climb with the girl's father shooting at him with his bow and arrows. As he was a Jenni none of the arrows touched him and at last he reached the tree-top. The girl was given to him, and he took her to his home. There he started to ill-treat her until the girl decided to run back to her father.

The man told the father that before he took back her daughter he must climb the tree. The father, when he was climbing, the man shot him with his bow and arrow and he died. He then took the girl with him and they lived happily.

A Wolof story, with similar elements, Un mechant vieux, is given by Jean Copans et Philippe Couty: Contes Wolof du Baol, Dakar, 1968, p. 46

Source: Story written in English by Sidi Sanneh, while at the  
Gambia High School, 1963

(20)

The brothers

Once upon a time there were five brothers who lived in one compound with their mother and father. Four of them did not want their younger brother to follow them wherever they go. This policy was that of every Mandingo because they think that the younger brother will not respect them and that whatever they did on the way, when they come back, he will try to tell it to people.

One day the four brothers decided to go to a village which is six miles away. In those day there were no vehicles so they had to walk by foot. They set off for the village and the younger one wanted to follow them, but they refused and drove him back. He was crying so that he might follow them. He again waited until the four went, and followed them without the brothers knowing. When they were three miles away from home, they saw their younger brother coming. So they stopped and tried to send him back again, but they were half way. So they (let him come) with them.

When they arrived in the village they went to the person whom they were to visit, but unfortunately they said that the man was no longer staying in the village. So they wondered where to stay for the night. They went up a street, and on the way they met an old woman who asked them what was their reason for roaming in the street like strangers. They then told the mother that there were finding (looking for) a place to sleep for the night. So the woman volunteered to find a place for them in her room.

When it was night, they went to bed. The woman had five children and they were in one bed, and the five brothers on the other. When it was midnight the woman woke up and took her cutlass, and started to sharpen it, when the younger brother heard it. So he woke up and asked the woman what she was doing with the cutlass. The young boy then went and changed the cloths which the children of the woman were wearing and gave them theirs. When the woman came she thought that the strangers were her children and went and killed her own children. At about 5 a.m. in the morning the

small boy woke his brothers and they set off.

This story tells us that whenever you are going out, you should carry your brother with you.

Recorded on tape at Kerewan, Lower Baddibu, 1966

Informant: an adult woman

(21)

The Clever Child

n taling n taling.

(Reply: Njamme)

Dinding ne, a ba y'a boi nyameng,  
a denano,  
keo ye ninso samba nang,  
ninsindingo...

A nata, a ye dindingo tara je,  
y'a ku, y'a landi sankeo koto-  
denano.

A ko "Salam alekum."

A k'a ye "Malekum salam."

"Juma le be jang?"

A k'a ye "Nte le; n dango doyata,  
bari n ke jabi la. Tambi nang."

Biring a tambita, a sita.

A k'a ye "Dinding, ite ba le?"

A k'a ye "M ba bota jang,  
a ye dimba tu a fa bora kang,  
a tata a fa wandi fa bora kang."

A k'a ye: "Munne mu wo ti?"

A k'a ye ko "A ye nte wulu saing,  
saing, saing,

i ko a doko wuluta, a tata wo le to.

*(She makes a correction)*

A doko be tingo kono,  
a tato wo le to.

Yo, a nata, a k'a ye ko  
"Dinding, ta jio di n na, nga ming."

A tata (si) jibinda kang,  
a meta, a meta, a meta, a man na.

A nata; a k'a ye  
"Bari i meta le!"

A k'a ye "N ka nyinang jio aning  
serung jio le bo nyo to."

A k'a ye "Ye tonya la."

A k'a ye "Ta dimba ta n ye nang."  
A tata dimba ta.

A meta, a meta, a meta, a man na.  
(Biring a nata) a k'a ye

"Dinding, bari i meta!"

A k'a ye "N ka nyinang dimba ning  
serung dimba le bo nyo to."

I have a tale

There was a child, just after his mother had  
given birth, (still) a baby,  
a man brought a cow,  
a small cow..

He came and found the child there,  
they had washed him and set him down behind  
the mosquito net - the baby

He said "Peace on you."

(The baby) replied "On you be peace."

"Who is here?"

(The baby) said "It is me, my size is small,  
but I can reply to you. Come in."

When he came in, he sat down.

The man) said to him "Child, where is your  
mother?"

The child said "My mother has gone out from here,  
she has left the fire in her father's beard,  
and has gone to put it out in someone else's  
father's beard."

The man asked him "What is that?"

He replied to him "She gave birth to me just  
now,

they say her younger sister has given birth,  
she has gone to that one.

her sister is in labor,  
she has gone to that one.

Well then, he went on to say to him

"Child, go and give me water to drink."

He went and (sat ?) on the water jar,  
he was a long time there, and did not come.

When he came back he said to him

"But you were a long time!"

He replied "I was separating this year's  
water and last year's water."

*(By waiting for the water to settle)*

He said to him "You've spoken the truth."

He said to him "Go and fetch fire for me."  
He went to fetch fire.

He was a very long time, and did not come.  
(When he came) he said:

"Child, but you were a long time!"

He said "I was separating this year's fire  
from last year's."



A k'a ye "Wo mu mune ti ?"  
 A k'a ye "N tata dimba ye  
 (tosita, sebuto kuianta ?)  
 A k'a ye "Tonya la."

He asked "What is that ?"  
 He said to him "I went to the fire  
 which was low, the ashes covered it (?)  
 He said to him "True."

A k'a ye ko "Dinding, i fa le ?"  
 A k'a ye ko " N fa tata kunko  
 sutiandi su le."  
 A k'a ye "Wo mu munne ti ?"  
 A k'a ye "A tata kunku fito."

He said to him "Child, where is your father ?"  
 He said to him "My father went to shorten the  
 distance of the farm from home."  
 He asked "What is that ?"  
 He replied "He went to clear the farm."

*(The correct version is that he went to weed the path, a clear path  
 shortening the time taken to reach the farm)*

A k'a ye ko "I koto le ?"

He asked the child "Where is your elder  
 brother ?"

A k'a ye "N koto tata duniya  
 lakira."

He replied "My elder brother went to the  
 world's limbo."

A k'a dindingo ye "Munne mu wo ti ?"  
 A k'a ye "A tata kelo to,  
 f'a be na, f'a te na."

He asked the child "What is that ?"  
 He replied "He went to the war,  
 (no one knows) if he will come back or not."

A k'a ye ko "Dinding,  
 ite dung be munne la jang ?"

He said to the child "Child,  
 what are you doing here ?

*(Narrator now seems to become confused, and repeats part of the first episode)*

"N fango fele,  
 m ba ye wulu saing,  
 a tata a doko la tingo to."

"Here I am,  
 my mother has given birth now,  
 she has gone to her sister's labor."

"Dinding...m be dinding la  
 diyamo la nyinola.  
 A k'a ye ko "Yo."  
 A ye nying ninsi siti jang,  
 (A ko) "ni i fa nata, a b'a tara  
 la jang; ni i ba nata,  
 i be nying ninso tara jang ne."  
 A ba nata, a ba k'a ye ko:  
 "Jena ye nying ninso siti jang ?"  
 A k'a ye ko:  
 "Ke le nata n jube jang,  
 wo le nying ninso ke jang."  
 A k'a ye "Di ?"  
 A k'a ye "Ha."  
 A k'a ye ko "Ali nga samba mansa la  
 koreo to."  
 Baba ye ninso samba mansa la koreo  
 to.

(The man said) : "Child, I am looking for  
 children's words (wisdom)."  
 The child replied "Yes."  
 He tied the cow there  
 and said) "When your father comes, he will find  
 it here, when your mother comes,  
 they will find this cow here."  
 His mother came, and asked him:  
 "Who tied this cow here ?"  
 He said to her:  
 "It was a man who came to see me here,  
 it was he who put the cow here."  
 She said to him "Indeed ?"  
 He replied "Yes."  
 She said to him "Let is take it to the  
 King's herd."  
 Father took the cow to the King's herd.

Ninso wuluta, a wuluta, a wuluta,  
 f'a dingol' siata.  
 Bitung dindingo kebayata,  
 a sita kantaro ma.  
 A k'a be ninso bo la koreo to.  
 A tata je,  
 Mansa k'a ye ko "Ila ninsol' te  
 jang. I nyanta a je kotong ye i  
 wulu.

The cow gave birth, and gave birth and gave  
 birth until its offspring were pltniful.  
 Then the child had become older,  
 he was ready to go herding.  
 He said he would take the cow from the herd.  
 He went there.

The King said "Your cows are not here.  
 You ought to know a male produced them.

Kotong te ite (bulu ?), yereo le."

You have no male, only a female."

*(The last couple of sentences are obscure in the recording, but the meaning  
 is clear)*

A k'a ye "Di ?"

A ko "Ha."

Dindingo tata.  
Suto kuta nyameng,  
a ye terango ta,  
a tata mansa la jonkongo to,  
a ye boi yiri kuntu ba kang,  
pit, pit, pit.  
Mansa barata rid,  
a tata je, a k'a ye ko:  
"Ite nata munne la jang ?"  
A k'a ye "Baba le wuluta,  
n nata wo la jiba lo-kuntu nyino la."

A k'a ye "Di ?"  
A k'a ye "Ha."  
A k'a ye "Ite jankading,  
ta ila ninsol' bo na koreo to."  
A tata ninsol' bo koreo to.

Dindingo tata kantaro la.  
(Mansa ko: )  
"Ali nying samba wo kambano  
meng b'ali ya, a f'a ye ko,  
a b'a yelemendi n ye findi ti  
saing saing,  
a ye jō ke a kang,  
a ye mo,  
a y'a tei,  
a y'a kung siti-ma samba nying nang."

A tata wo la, a y'a di muso la.

Muso be kumbo la.  
A dingo nata, a y'a tara a be  
kumbo la, a y'a nyininka.  
A k'a ye "Mansa ko nga nying  
findi chere-cherō ta i ye,  
nga jio ke a kang.

*(The narrator does not complete the rest of the sequence. The first task changing something (not specified) , sand ? into findo seed, seems to be an error. The next episode involves a change.)*

A k'a "Ite fanang ka wo le kumbo ?"  
A tata , a k'a ye ko "Mansa,  
-Mansa be laring bungo kono-  
a tata nyameng, a y'a fang  
namandi bunda la, f'a boita.  
A k'a ye "Nying du ?  
munne ye i boi jang ?"  
A k'a ye ko " Sanjio le ka ke,  
n namata, fo m boita i bungda to,  
fo ite mang kalamuta ?  
A k'a ye ko "Sanjio ?"  
A ko "Ha."  
"Jenne nene je tilikandi ba kela  
sanji ?"

He said to him "Really ?"

The (King) replied: "Yes."

The boy went off,  
As soon as night fell,  
he took his ax,  
he went to the King's back yard,  
and fell to cutting a big log,

The King was very startled,  
and went there and said to him  
"What have you come here for ?"  
He replied "My father has given birth,  
I have come to get the wood for the birth-  
fire." *(Kept burning during the first week  
after a birth)*  
He replied "What do you say ?"  
He said "Yes, indeed."  
The (King) said "You little bastard,  
go and take your cows from my herd."  
He went and took the cows from the herd.

The boy went off to herd.  
The King said:  
"Take this to that youth,  
which is in your place, and tell him,  
to change it to findo (digitaria) at once,  
  
and put water on it,  
until it ripens,  
he should reap it,  
and bring it to me in head loads."

(The messenger) went then and gave it to  
the woman.  
The woman was crying.  
Her child came, he found she was crying,  
he asked her (why).  
She said to him : "The King said I should  
take this findo seed for you,  
and put water on it.

He said "Is that what you are crying about ?"  
He went , and called "King...  
the King was lying down in his house -  
as soon as he reached (the house), he  
pretended to slip at the door, and fell down.  
The King asked "What is this ?  
what made you fall down here ?"  
He replied "It was raining,  
I slipped, and fell at your door,  
or did n't you realise it ?"  
He replied "Rain ?"  
The boy replied "Yes."  
"Whoever saw rain in the middle of the dry  
season ?"

A k'a ye "Tonya. Jene nene y'a je findo ka tilikandi faling ?"

He replied "True, and whoever heard of findo germinating in the middle of the dry season ?"

A muruta tukung,  
a ye kenye-kenyo bi,  
a ye samba i ye.  
A k'a y'a chench...fenko..  
..sukada-kungo to.  
A k'a ye "Baba, i ka mune kumbo ?"  
"Mansa ye n jomoli jang,  
a ko nga chench a ye sukara-kungo ti."  
A k'a ye "Sukara kungo ?"  
A tata a k'a ye ko "Manso,  
n fu sukata kung koto...  
m be na sukata kung kuta le tembe."  
A ko "Jene le kenye-kenye ke sukara ti...i jankadingo,  
ta i fa ya,  
na kenye-kenye samba nang."

He returned again,  
(the king) gathered up sand,  
and sent it to them.  
He said he should change it to a..what's its name..a block of sugar.  
The son said "What are you crying about ?"  
"The King has puzzled me here,  
He says I should change it into a block of sugar for him."  
He asked "A block of sugar ?"  
He went and said "King,  
lend me your old block of sugar,  
I want to make my new block the same size."  
He said "Whoever turned sand into sugar ?  
you little bastard,  
go back to your father,  
and return my sand."

( The pronunciation heard on the tape "Sukada.." seems strange, but from the context, it seems that sugar is meant.)

n taling taling  
konkoronding kos.

Here is the tale,  
That's the end.

*Though in some respects this story was not told well, it is interesting in that it combines both the replies of a clever child to the old man's questions with the child's ability to get out of situations where he has been required to complete a task which would normally take a long time in a few moments, or to perform a task which is completely impossible.*

*Tales involving impossible tasks are widespread in West Africa. A good example is given by Ruth Finnegan in Limba Stories & Storytelling, Oxford, 1967, pp. 187-191, from Sierra Leone.*

1. A copy of the tape is available in the Gambian Cultural Archives, Banjul.