

The Rabbit Tricks The Hyena And Steals His Guinea Corn

(As narrated by Naaja Bilinyi at Kutol on 17/03/2022)

Introduction

In the story below, the rabbit – the wisest animal character in Konkomba folklore – is at his antics again. In this story, a child narrator relates how the rabbit pulls a fast one on the hyena (the most unintelligent animal character in Konkomba folklore) and steals his guinea corn. According to the narrative, the rabbit deceives the hyena into selling his mother while his (the rabbit's) mother is clandestinely told to run away. After that, the rabbit again tricks the hyena and steals his guinea corn.

Story

'My story is as follows:' Naaja announces to his audience and proceeds thus:

All animals lived with their mothers. But one day *naachiin* decided to sell his mother. He agreed with *sandee* that they would each sell their mothers. *naachiin* tied a big, strong rope around the mother's neck, took her to the market and sold her. However, *sandee* tied a very thin, weak rope around the mother's neck and told her to break free and run away when they got to the market. As a result, when they arrived at the market with their mothers, *sandee's* mother broke free and ran away. But *naachiin*... (*Naaja appears to be struggling to recollect the next details of the story.*)

'*naachiin* sold his mother,' chips in one of Naaja's audience, on realising that the storyteller is struggling to remember the next details.

'*naachiin* sold her and bought guinea corn when he was about to return home,' Naaja integrates the audience's addition and continues his rendition.

Immediately *naachiin* departed, *sandee* quickly ran ahead of him and played dead on the road *naachiin* had taken. As soon as *naachiin* passed, *sandee* ran again ahead of him and played dead on the road. On seeing the 'dead' *sandee*, *naachiin* mocked him and continued his journey. *sandee* once again ran ahead of him and played dead again. At this point, *naachiin* decided that the carcasses of the rabbits would make good meat for him and his family. He therefore picked the 'dead' *sandee*, left the guinea corn he had bought at the market and returned to pick the second 'dead' rabbit he had earlier seen on the road.

As soon as *naachiin* left to pick the other rabbit, *sandee* emptied the latter's guinea corn and refilled *naachiin's* container with gravel. When *naachiin* finally got home, he told his family to bring storage containers and empty into them the guinea corn he had brought from the market. On pouring out the

contents of the container, they discovered gravel rather than guinea corn.

'*sandee* had deceived him and stolen the guinea corn,' one of the audience interjects.

'Mm!' Naaja confirms, after which the same person adds:

'When he went to pick the other dead *sandee*, the actual *sandee* stole his guinea corn and ran away. In the end, he had neither the dead rabbits nor his guinea corn.'

'Mm! You've done well,' he tells the child narrator.

'Well done,' adds another person from the audience, after which everyone claps for the storyteller.

A Glossary of Likpakpaln Words

naachiin (aka tɔkɔ or baanaan):

Likpakpaln word for a hyena. In Konkomba folklore, naachiin is the most unintelligent animal character. It almost always falls prey to the antics of others, especially *sandee*—as pertains in this story for instance.

sandee:

Likpakpaln word for a rabbit, bunny or hare. Sandee is the wisest and trickster character in Konkomba folklore. It is notorious for often using its cunning and witty nature to deceive other characters or wriggle its way out of difficult situations.