

The Rabbit outwits the Hyena

(As told by Jalula Jagri at Kakpeekni, Saboba on 19/03/2022)

Introduction

The story below details how the rabbit outsmarts the hyena in a battle between strength and intelligence. The two friends are given meat as a reward for a kind gesture but the hyena beats the rabbit and confiscates his share of the meat. Through a clever trick, the rabbit however reclaims all the meat in the end. To watch the Likpakpaln narration [click here](#).

Story

'My story is as follows:'Jalula announces and proceeds thus:

There once lived *sandee* and

. The two were very good friends who did things in common. They lived in a foreign land. One day, the two friends were returning from a drinking spree when sandee suddenly tripped over something (and fell). He then told his friend, 'Baanaan, my pal, pause for a second. I stepped on something slippery here.' On groping the ground, he found *litabaaboln*. The two friends took the object and proceeded to the village.

On reaching the village, they discovered that the *litabaaboln* belonged to the of the village - for the latter had sent word throughout the village that he had lost his

. He even promised that any person or group of persons who found and returned it to him would be given a special reward.

Sandee and baanaan came to a consensus and returned the object to *ubor*. This pleased *ubor* very much. On taking custody of his *litabaaboln*, he asked the two friends where they hailed from. The two replied that they came from *Kitinpilnbu*. *Ubor* then revealed that he had a gift for them and that the gift belonged solely to the two of them. They were supposed to return to their home village and enjoy the gift there. *Ubor* then ordered that two bulls and three rams be killed. The meat was to be shared equally between sandee and baanaan. When that was done, *ubor* thanked them again and they set off.

The two had barely left the premises of the palace when baanaan broke into song:

(The storyteller intones the song and his audience join in.)

Likpakpaln transcription

English translation

Unaabɔr nti ti ninmeen chɔi –
Ti tin ji Kitiɲpilnɲbu.

Unaabɔr nti ti ninmeen chɔi
Ti tin ji Kitiɲpilnɲuuu!!!

When they had journeyed homeward to a point where they could no longer see the houses behind them, baanaan asked sandee whether or not ubor had specifically mentioned his name. Sandee responded in the affirmative. The former then said, 'Let's go then.' As they resumed walking, baanaan started singing again:

(The storyteller intones the song again and his audience join in.)

Unaabɔr has given us something fatty
To eat at Kitiɲpilnɲbu.(3x)

Unaabɔr has given us something fatty
To eat at Kitiɲpilnɲuuu!!!

Likpakpɛɛn transcription

Unaabɔr nti ti ninmeen chɔi –
Ti tin ji Kitiɲpilnɲbu.

Unaabɔr nti ti ninmeen chɔi
Ti tin ji Kitiɲpilnɲuuu!!!

English translation

Unaabɔr has given us something fatty
To eat at Kitiɲpilnɲbu.(2x)

Unaabɔr has given us something fatty
To eat at Kitiɲpilnɲuuu!!!

After the two friends had journeyed further, baanaan told sandee that all the meat belonged to him and that sandee had no claim to it. He argued that sandee was too small in stature and that he (baanaan) was the one who picked up the litabaaboln. He added that the only reason he allowed sandee to speak at ubor's palace was because he (baanaan) wasn't articulate in speech.

Heated exchanges ensued between the two as a result, ultimately degenerating into fisticuffs. Baanaan bit off one of sandee's ears and the latter fled the scene as fast as his legs could carry him. His initial plan was to run back and tell ubor what his friend had done to him. But on second thought, he stopped, took another route and ran ahead of baanaan. He then picked a red rope and tied on it a white kola nut, the skull of a dog and the tail of a horse. After that he tied the rope across the path baanaan was journeying on. Having done that, he hid in the bush and waited for him.

Baanaan, who was dancing all along while carrying the meat, soon got to the spot where sandee was hiding. He hit the rope sandee had tied across the path and staggered under the weight of the meat. On regaining his balance, he looked at the rope and its accessories in bewilderment and asked, 'Grandpa, what are you doing here? Are you looking for me?' But the rope didn't respond. He then asked, 'Do you want meat?' Again, the rope didn't respond. He enquired further, 'Do you want the head of the bull?'

At this point sandee pulled the rope and it shook, whereupon baanaan dropped the head of the bull. He then told the rope, 'Well, please let me through.' But the rope didn't respond. Baanaan then asked again, 'Do you want meat?' The rope shook in response. 'What do you want; the bull's leg?' Sandee pulled the rope and it shook again. Baanaan obliged and dropped the bull's leg. This continued until baanaan had no meat left on him.

Unfortunately, the rope would still not let him through. He became terrified and enquired again, 'Grandpa, who do you want? Me?' Sandee pulled the rope again, whereupon baanaan wet himself and took off running as fast as he could.

'This is the end of my story,' Jalula concludes and adds:

'The story seeks to teach us that we should have mutual respect for all. No one should use his or her intelligence or physical strength to cheat others. Baanaan wanted to use his might to cheat sandee but the latter outwitted him.'

A Glossary of Likpakpaln Words and Phrases (or Expressions)

baanaan (aka tɔkɔ):

Likpakpaln word for a hyena. In Konkomba folklore, baanaan is the most unintelligent animal character. It almost always falls prey to the antics of others, especially sandee (i.e., rabbit).

litabaaboln.:

a wooden pipe for smoking tobacco, marijuana, etc.

maatiin kpelb aanaa wɔŋ:

translated as 'The end of my story seeks/requires a continuation.' This is one of the numerous ways in which a Konkomba storyteller can end a tale.

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.

ubor:

the political head of a Konkomba community. Ubor is usually the eldest male member of the royal family. He inherits that position from his father after the latter's demise. Thus, Konkombas practise the patrilineal system of inheritance.