

THE RICH FARMER AND HIS WASTEFUL SON

(as narrated by Gmakanwadoon at Kutol on 18/03/2022)

Introduction

The story below details how a rich farmer shows his son unconditional but tough love. According to the story, the son requests for a share of his father's wealth; but on receiving it, he mismanages the wealth in a foreign land and soon becomes poor. On returning to his father, he is received with open arms. But the father insists that the young man cannot lay claim to the rest of his property since he has already squandered his share. He then advises the son to be diligent in order to make it and maintain the wealth. The story essentially celebrates diligence and unconditional love laced with a hint of tough love. Ultimately, it seeks to teach parents to love their children unconditionally but also discipline them when the need arises. Most importantly, the story reveals that one achievement marker among the Konkomba people is success at farming. You may read more about this in a short article titled 'Concepts of Achievement among Konkombas: Representation in Their Folktales.'

Story

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

There once lived a certain *ukpadaan* who had many children. One day the youngest of them requested that their father's *liwankpal* be shared among them. The father agreed and shared the property. After receiving his share, the youngest son relocated to *timoori* while his other siblings remained at home with theirs.

In no time, the youngest son squandered his share of the property in the *timoori*. He then decided that he would return home and engage in *badee* labour in his father's farm. While on his way home, his father saw him from a distance and ran to welcome him. The boy told his father that he had returned to serve as a farmhand on his father's farm in order to earn his daily wages. However, his father wouldn't hear of it, insisting that he was still his son and could therefore not serve as a farmhand.

The youngest son soon became prosperous again. But he was never allowed to touch the rest of his father's wealth since he had already squandered his share. His father reminded him that he had to be diligent in order to safeguard the wealth he had made and not lose it again. This is the end of my story.

A Glossary of Likpakpaln Words

badee

an appropriated and corrupted version of the English phrase, "by day." It is often used to describe a situation where someone earns his wage on a daily basis. Konkomba farmers sometimes hire farmhands to work on their farms. Some of these labourers work and earn their wages on a daily basis. This is why it is called "by day" or badee.

liwankpal

Likpakpaln word for wealth. In certain contexts, it also refers to property or possessions.

timoorni

in everyday usage, this word is the Likpakpaln equivalent of the English word "bush". However, in advanced Likpakpaln usage, it refers to a foreign land (be it a village, town, city, country, continent, etc.) The latter case applies in this story. Thus, the young man relocated to a foreign land.

ukpadaan

Likpakpaln word for a rich person. It is one of the gender-neutral words in the Konkomba language. Unlike some other gender-neutral Likpakpaln words, ukpadaan cannot be inflected to indicate a person's gender. One had to therefore rely on the context to determine the gender of a person.