

Tabi texts 2004-1a

2004-1a.01 Hyena, goat, three truths I (tale)

Sa: A tale.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: One day, hyena (H) and (male) goat (G), they encountered each other on the road. Goat said-- (Or rather) hyena said to goat: you (G) must say three truths, (then) I will leave you.

Goat stood in silence. He (G) said to hyena: now if I went and said to the other goats¹ that now a hyena encountered me on the road and you did nothing (bad) to me, the (other) goats will not accept (=believe it).

(Goat continued:) You, the hyena, if you went and said that you— (said) to (the) other hyenas that you encountered a goat on the road, and then you did nothing to it (=goat), the other hyenas will not accept (=believe it), (they will say), as for those (words), they are just a lot of (empty) talk.

(G continued:) Now, you (H) are not hungry.² That's why³ all that talk is around us.

He (H) said, by God, it's true.

Hyena proceeded onward, and goat proceeded onward (=they separated). Hyena said to goat: another day, let's encounter each other, right here in the very same place.

Hyena happened to run into goat one day, as he (G) was eating grass and tree leaves. That day, hyena was very hungry.⁴ Hyena said: today (=this time), there is not any great deal of talk; so I must just catch and eat you.⁵ There will not be much other talk, so I must just catch and eat you.

Well, then hyena jumped on the goat's neck and caught (it). Well, hyena caught and ate goat.

Here (this matter) and its tail are ended.

2004-1a.02 Hyena, sheep, three truths (tale)

Bo: A tale.

Sa: Okay.

Bo: One day, sheep (S) was eating grass at the edge of the houses (=village). Hyena (H) came and found it (S). It (S) said: hey hyena, it said, greetings, my (maternal) uncle!⁶ Hyena said: Greetings to you too! It (H) said: greetings, you now my nephew!

(H:) Your mother, in our neighborhood, whose sister is she? Furthermore, even if the greeting is like that, as for the greeting, in order to say a greeting to me, you must speak three truths to me. (You) having spoken three truths, I am willing to leave⁷ you (alone).

¹ Lit. "remainder of goats."

² lit. "you-Sg do not have hunger" (phrasing as in German).

³ Lit. "that being done (=being the case), ..."

⁴ lit. "hunger caught hyena."

⁵ Imperative verb with 1Sg subject.

⁶ Sheep suggests a kinship relationship to Hyena in order to avoid being devoured.

⁷ Hortative verb (pás-é) with 1Sg subject.

(S:) Now, if I go home, among the (other) sheep, and say that a hyena encountered me and didn't say anything to me (=let me go), the other sheep won't accept (=believe) me. Likewise,⁸ if you (H) go (and say) to the other hyenas that you encountered a sheep and did nothing to the sheep, the other hyenas will not accept (=believe it).

It (H) said: very true.

(S:) But now, you are not hungry. When you are hungry, only then you will eat me. There should not be lots of talk between us. But tomorrow, at this place, at this time, let's meet each other! As for me, as for me, I have no difficulty. Will you (H) go and come (back) (tomorrow), or (not)? (H:) As for me, I have no difficulty.

Hyena went on (his way). Hyena—. Sheep raised his head and looked. Hyena went (=kept going) until he had gone far away. Sheep leaped over a wall and went into (a pen). Sheep said (=thought), if he (H) goes away today, I (S) will not go far away any more.

(Sheep): they ask, my mother, whose sister is she?

After he went away, in the late afternoon (around 4 PM), Sheep came home. The sun had not yet set on it (S). Hyena encountered him (S), and he (H) was asking (him), your mother is whose sister?

The story and its tail are finished.

2004-1a.03 Pigeon (giant head) in a pit (tale)

Sa: A tale.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A man came and went out. He was very powerful. He was very powerful. He thought that, of all men, he was the most powerful. Yes.

He got up. He was walking around. Then (it is said) he encountered a man. He said that they (=he and other villagers) would go with him to the village (Tabi). That man was (way) out in the bush (=far from villages). Well, the man, he now, he was in a (deep) pit. He asked him, he said:

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
 (It is) you and who, pigeon?
 How many men, pigeon?
 Only one man, pigeon.
 One man, a man is not enough,⁹ go add more.

⁸ Lit. "it too, ...". Can also be construed as 'you too' (indirect discourse).

⁹ i.e., to pull me out of the hole.

Well, as for him, he went back. Yes. They went and came back with two men.
Yes.

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
(It is) you and who, pigeon?
Two men, pigeon.
Two men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

They went back. He went and got three men, they came (back).

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
(It is) you and who, pigeon?
Is it one man, pigeon?
Is it two men, pigeon?
Is it three men, pigeon?
Three men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

He went (back) in with him (another man). They went and came back with three men. Yes.

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
How many men, pigeon?
Is it one man, pigeon?
Is it two men, pigeon?
Is it three men, pigeon?
Is it four men, pigeon?
Is it five men, pigeon?
Five men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

He went. They went and added two others. They became seven.

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
How many men, pigeon?
Is it one man, pigeon?
Is it two men, pigeon?
Is it three men, pigeon?
Is it four men, pigeon?
Is it five men, pigeon?
Is it six men, pigeon?
Is it seven men, pigeon?
Seven men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

Yes. Even now, he said that they, his men (=the men who came to help him), were not enough. They went back. They got two other (=additional) men and added them. They became nine men. They assembled and came. Yes.

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
 How many men, pigeon?
 Is it one man, pigeon?
 Is it two men, pigeon?
 Is it three men, pigeon?
 Is it four men, pigeon?
 Is it five men, pigeon?
 Is it six men, pigeon?
 Is it seven men, pigeon?
 Is it eight men, pigeon?
 Is it nine men, pigeon?
 Nine men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

They went and brought (“caused to arrive”) ten. The ten whom they brought, well, they assembled together and came. Now, they were ten men--. Ten men, whether he agrees or he does not agree (that there are enough of them), (they intended that) they would take hold of him and pull him out. As for the ten men, when they come together (unite), as against one man’s body, he too will know (=realize) (that) ten men are not something slight (=inadequate to pull him out).

Lo, as for pigeon (=the man in the pit), even one (ordinary) man is stronger than he (is). Sitting in the pit, he had nothing but a big head, a pure fake.

Ten men assembled together and came. Yes.

[song:] pigeon, greetings!, pigeon.
 How many men, pigeon?
 Is it one man, pigeon?
 Is it two men, pigeon?
 Is it three men, pigeon?
 Is it four men, pigeon?
 Is it five men, pigeon?
 Is it six men, pigeon?
 Is it seven men, pigeon?

Is it eight men, pigeon?
 Is it nine men, pigeon?
 Is it ten men, pigeon?
 Ten men, (the) men are not enough, go add more.

The ten men did not believe that they as ten men were not enough for (=to lift out) one man. They they went into action. They took hold of him in the opening (“mouth”) of the pit and were yanking him out. They caught at (=tried to take hold) of his hand and pulled hard to get him out, when (in fact) Pigeon was nothing but a head, amounting to nothing. They hit and tied him up and went carrying him to Tabi village.

Well, the story and its tail are over.

2004-1a.04 Wife retrieves husband (tale)

Bo: A tale.

Sa: Okay.

Bo: A man and his wife came out. They sat (=lived) together, until they got a child. Then a famine came in. When day would break, the woman would tell him to pull it (=take out food for the day from the granary). (When) he went inside the granary, the woman would wait for him. Then the woman would come with the gear (=basket) and (he would) take out some millet (and) he would give it (=millet) to the woman. Lo, (one day) it (=millet) was exhausted.

One day in that situation, well, when the woman told him to take out (=provide) the millet to put in (the basket), then he went up into the granary. Well, he said: come! Now the woman--, she was washing her hands, (intending) that she would take the gear (=basket) and come (to get more millet).

(The man thought:) if (=seeing that) she isn't coming, as for me, I will definitely go down. She said she was coming. So the man jumped down and ran. Lo, there was nothing in the granary (to give her). The man ran away.

The man hid in the bush (away from the village). The man was in the bush, he was in the bush, he was in the bush, until the harvest time approached. Now the new millet appeared. Now, they were taking out (=harvesting) their new millet, they were cooking their millet cakes, they were eating. Now the people were well-fed.

Now, the woman was going around asking for her husband, she went around all over asking, she went around all over asking, whether they hadn't seen her husband. Finally now she heard (them say) that her husband was in the woodland (savanna).

(She thought): now, (she must find) the one who was to come back with her husband for her. All the birds called together. Now she made a meal, she made it until there was a lot. Then now, she said: hey you-Pl, come and eat the meal, and then you-Pl come back with my husband for me, (go) track down my husband and come (back)!

Firefinch ate. She said (to firefinch): now you go and take (=get). When you go (there), now, (tell me) what you will do to call to my husband so that he will come? (Firefinch:) kikiri-kikiriw! kikiri-kikiriw! kikiri-kikiriw! (Woman:) you cannot (=wouldn't be able to) come and call my husband (back)!

Now that white bird¹⁰ too ate (a meal), until it was full (sated). (Woman:) now you go and call and come (back). White bird—white bird in turn, he in turn, (called) kikikiwkiw! kikikiwkiw! She said: you too cannot come and call my husband back.

(She said) to dove¹¹: you, having eaten, now go and call my husband to come. Two doves, the doves, when they had eaten and were full, (called): kurukuti! kurukuti!. She said, ah, that won't call (back) my husband.

(Pied) crow ate. He too got up, he went (=flew) up onto a tree (and called): ka! ka! ka!. She said to him too (crow): that won't call my husband (back). All the birds (did) like that.

Now crowned crane remained. She said to crane: now, having eaten, you must go, now you must go, now you must go and look. Crowned crane said: as for me, first, when I see your husband, that with which (=the way) I will call the husband, having sung the song¹² for him, (only) then, as for me, will I eat. Well, she said, now: you sing the song for me!

Then it (crane) said (called out):

kuwa! kuwa! You come!

kuwa! kuwa! You come!

Your wife calls you. You come!

Your wife¹³ calls you. You come!

Your uncle¹⁴ calls you. You come!

Your aunt¹⁵ calls you. You come!

There is no famine (on) the mountain. You come!

¹⁰ The golden sparrow and similar small, light-colored birds.

¹¹ Laughing dove.

¹² lie. "sing (and) show."

¹³ In the repetition (see below), 'your child' occurs in this position.

¹⁴ Father's younger brother.

¹⁵ Father's sister. Can also denote one's mother's co-wife.

She said: exactly! Precisely you (unlike the others) can call my husband. Then crane came down, crane ate until it was full. Now crane went. Crane (was) in the woodland now, crane was searching, he was searching, he was searching. He encountered that man now, he was sitting under a tree.

That (=the man's) head was extremely woolly with (long) hair. He was sitting in the little shade of a tree. Then crane came and landed majestically on the top ("head") of the tree. Then crane said (called):

kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 Your wife calls you. You come!
 Your child calls you. You come!
 Your uncle calls you. You come!
 Your aunt calls you. You come!
 There is no famine (on) the mountain. You come!

Sa: Exactly!

Bo: Then, it stopped abruptly, in silence. Ah, then, he (man) looked upward. <xxx> to crane. Crane was sitting, he said:

kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 Your wife calls you. You come!
 Your child calls you. You come!
 Your uncle calls you. You come!
 Your aunt calls you. You come!
 Your maternal uncle calls you. You come!¹⁶
 There is no famine (on) the mountain. You come!

(Man:) "hmm, so there is no famine on the mountain? That bad (=terrible) famine of the mountain has gone away?" Well, now he got up. At once, crane flew forward and went there. It (crane) said:

kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 kuwa! kuwa! You come!

¹⁶ This line occurs here for the first time.

Your wife calls you. You come!
 Your child calls you. You come!
 Your uncle calls you. You come!
 Your aunt calls you. You come!
 Your maternal uncle calls you. You come!
 There is no famine (on) the mountain. You come!

Now, they went and went and went, until they came and arrived at the edge of the village. Again it went up. It said:

kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 kuwa! kuwa! You come!
 Your wife calls you. You come!
 Your child calls you. You come!
 Your uncle calls you. You come!
 Your aunt calls you. You come!
 Your maternal uncle calls you. You come!
 There is no famine (on) the mountain. You come!

Now (they) had come and arrived at the edge of the village. Now, that man came (into the village).

Then, now they (villagers) took him inside the house, they put water in the toilet (bathing) area, they washed him, they shaved his head thoroughly, and now they took down (from the oven) (and put) in front of him a wooden bowl (full) of millet cakes. Now he was eating out of that bowl of millet cakes.

“Hey!”¹⁷ “They are well!” “The village is well!” “The mountain is well!” “Our entire country, has nothing else bad happened (to it)?” “Are (my) maternal uncles here?” “Are (my) paternal uncles here?” “Are (my) paternal aunts here?” (They) said: everyone is here. “Has nothing (bad) happened?” “Has no-one died?” (Villagers:) “Everything is here.”

Now he was there, he was putting those huge handfuls (of millet cake) into his mouth. Now he was there, he was putting those huge handfuls (of millet cake) into his mouth, until he was full. Well, hey, eventually the famine of the mountain went away.

Now he looked at his wife. “Is that you?” Lo, it was her indeed. “Hah! now God be praised. Indeed, now I have found you all, thanks to God.”

The story and its tail are finished. It’s finished now.

¹⁷ After he eats, they exchange greetings and news.

2004-1a.05 Hyena, goat, monkey, and squirrel (tale)

Sa: A tale.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: Well, hyena came and encountered goat, in a deep pit, in an earth pit. Hyena began circling around goat. Hyena wanted to catch and eat that goat. (But) if hyena went into the pit, he would not be able to get out.

Hyena kept going around and coming around, he kept going around and coming around. He looked (and saw that), (as for) this goat, its plumpness was very great. Hyena plunged into the pit. Goat leaped outside (the pit) and landed with a thud. Hyena remained inside the pit for three days.

Hyena was seeing shadows passing by. (He said:) hey, son of God (=human), who is going by (=who goes there)? A monkey stopped and stood in silence (wondering), is that voice coming out somewhere over there? (Hyena:) hey, son of God, who is going by? Monkey leaned over to look, and lo, there was hyena in the hole.

He (Hyena) said: by God, you help me! You get me out! As for me, I (have been) three days in this hole and here I am, unable to get out! I slipped, as I was going by, I fell (in).

(Monkey) said: what put (=brought) you, (for you to) circle around at the mouth of the hole, never mind that you slipped and fell in?

(Hyena:) it was this way, the thing was an accident, I slipped and fell (in). He (=H) refused to say that he had encountered a goat and had then gone to (try to) catch it. As for that (matter), he refused (to say it). Yes.

Monkey said: hey, you have no trustworthiness. (You) tell me to get you out, then here you hope to catch and eat me, that's what you are doing to me!

(Hyena:) "Nope! I will not do that. Whenever you have gotten me out, God willing, I will thank (=bless) you well! Truly!

Monkey extended down his tail. Hyena went and was grabbing at it. Monkey didn't trust him, (so) monkey pulled his tail (back) up hard.

Well, (Hyena) said: don't do that, (instead) get me out! For three days I am (=have been) here in this hole, (s)o you get me out!

Well, Monkey extended his tail. He pulled hyena out. Well, hyena got out by being pulled. Monkey said to him: let go of my tail! Hyena said: my body is dancing (=shaking), so (please) wait a little (until) my body settles down from dancing. (Monkey:) Don't you see? That which I feared, there it is! It has come, hasn't it? (Hyena:) (as) a man, you, have pity (on me)! (Monkey:) I had pity on you, (because) for three days you were in the hole and couldn't get out.

(Monkey:) I got you out, and (now) you say that your body is dancing (shaking)! The body-shaking has settled down, (so) let go of my tail!

(Hyena:) (could you maybe) look for a place (in your body) that won't hurt (if I eat it)? (Just) a little. I have been in this hole for three days now, (and) hunger has caught (=afflicted) me. Look for some little thing (=body part), a place that won't hurt!

Hyena said—. Monkey said: there is no place in the body that won't hurt. Thus they kept arguing and arguing with each other.

Yes. A squirrel came. Squirrel asked: what is it? He asked: what are you-Pl arguing about?

Monkey said: I got hyena out from inside the earth pit. He was there for three days. Well, I got him out. Then, after I got him out, now he tells me to look at my body (to see whether there is) a place that won't hurt. He says (=intends) that he will cut up and eat me. I now (=on the contrary) say, as for that, it won't happen!

Nope, said squirrel, (that is) a lie. Where (=how) could you get the hyena out of the earth pit? He asked to hyena: was it true that he (=monkey) got you out. (Hyena) said, yes. (Squirrel) said, I don't accept (=believe) it.

Well, he (squirrel) said: you (two), do (“begin”) it again, in front of my eyes now, so that I may see it!

Well, hyena jumped into the earth pit, thud! Well, everyone (else), put (=take) one's path and look where to go!¹⁸

Bo: He looked and ran (=fled).

Sa: Then, squirrel leaped into its hole (=burrow), swoosh! Monkey leaped into the tree, swoosh! Well, in that way (=doing thus), as for those (animals), they scattered. Thus they got out of there in a flash.

The story and its tail are finished. It's over.

2004-1a.06 Hyena, goat, and lioness (tale)

Sa: A tale.

Bo: Okay.

¹⁸ kúló ‘put’ and èlá ‘look’ are imperative in form. The omniscient narrator is “speaking” to the characters.

Sa: Well, one day, hyena—, hyena and goat encountered each other in the bush. The goat was eating grass. Goat lowered his head and was eating grass, he was eating grass, he was eating grass. Hyena saw him.

Hyena sneaked up, he sneaked up, he sneaked up, and as soon as goat picked up (=raised) his head, hyena came up (to him). Well, there was no running away any more (at this point). Hyena seized goat.

Hyena thought: now, when I have gone and arrived under the shade of that big tree there, (if) here there is sun(light), I will look, and knock down (=kill) my goat, and eat my meat like that in the shade.¹⁹

They were approaching (the spot) under that shade, when lo, there was a lioness with a (broad) forehead who had just given birth. Lo, having given birth to three cubs (“children”), that lioness had no milk.

Yes, now, as soon as they (hyena and goat) came, now that hyena left the goat and stood looking at the lioness. The goat too stood looking at the lioness.

Lioness said to hyena, right now, you, come and tell me, how²⁰ I may get the milk, (so) these cubs of mine may live. As for me, I have no hunger.

Yes, hyena was standing (there), perplexed. There was no trick (=stragem) that hyena could speak (about) and get (the milk).

Goat said to lioness (with hyena listening): as for me, I know a way by (doing) which you may get that milk, he said, I know (it). He said: there is a waterjar shard.²¹ I have two stones, hyena’s head (will be) the third.²² Then we will set a fire, then put a waterjar shard up on it, then when the shard has become hot, then do whatchamacallit to that medicine (potion), stir it, and then make whatchamacallit for lioness. You (=lioness) must rub your body (with it) and sip (it). As for milk, it will be like nothing (=plentiful). As for your cubs, right away they will be with swollen hindquarters (=plump).

Hyena’s belly began to tremble. They didn’t know about hyena (whether he would agree) that whether the lioness’ cubs survived was more (important) than whether hyena survived.

Yes, (they) said to hyena: pick up and bring two stones! He looked and picked up and brought two stones. (They said:) well, come (approach) and lie down! They approached and put down the two stones, in the fashion of a (three-stone) hearth. Hyena’s head was the third (stone). (Now) they picked up the shard and put it up (on the hearth), and they lit a fire.

¹⁹ Example of the TS hortative (kúw-é) for what would be a simple future in English.

²⁰ lit. “(by) doing what.”

²¹ A broken piece of an old earthenware water jar. Concave in form, can hold a little liquid for boiling.

²² A hearth requires three stones, between which the fire is set, and on which the pot is set.

Hyena's head began to get hot. Hyena snatched (=pulled away) his head, then kicked away (=knocked) the shard (off the hearth), and put (=went on) his way.

Yes. Then lioness followed after (=pursued) hyena, powerfully. They kept (chasing) each other, they kept going together.

Well, billygoat too got (=took to) the road. He too (went) slowly (at first), then took off abruptly and headed for his (Fulbe) hamlet. He went leaping²³ into his herd (=pen). He survived.²⁴

Hyena and lioness now kept going straight (away from there) together. They (i.e. lioness) left their young (behind) under the tree.

The story and its tail are finished.

2004-1a.07 Ram, hyena, and the aardvark burrow (tale)

Bo: A tale.

Sa: Okay.

Bo: Some sheep were going to pasture. A ram [focus] was their herder (shepherd). Every day they would go to pasture and come (back).

Today like that (=on that day), a storm encountered them in the bush. When the storm encountered them in the bush, there was an old aardvark burrow there, so they ran for it (burrow). They came running to it, then they went inside that aardvark burrow.

As it happened, hyena too was there, he too was running and coming to that aardvark burrow. He too was running.

When he came (to the burrow), he found that a ram was blocking his way at the opening of the hole. When he (=Hyena) had stopped all at once, he was pleased.²⁵

Today, he said, when (=seeing that) that [focus] is what is blocking (=is stuck in) the opening of the burrow, the burrow is (=must be) chock full (of sheep). Hey, a meal has been made. Hey, a meal has been made. Hey, again (another) meal is being made.

Then he (=Hyena) launched into²⁶ a dance. Then, (he thought), as for the rams, I wonder what will I do? Should I eat one, or should I eat two? Well, whatever pleases you.

(H:) Should I eat two? (R:) Whatever pleases you.²⁷

(H:) Should I eat one? (R:) Whatever pleases you.

(H:) Should I eat three? (R:) Whatever pleases you.

(H:) Should I eat four? (R:) Whatever pleases you..

It (hyena) ran until it had gone some distance away. Now it came back running. It said to ram.

²³ lit. "slapping."

²⁴ lit. "got his head."

²⁵ "it was pleasing to him."

²⁶ lit. "caught."

²⁷ Series of parallel questions by hyena (H) followed by responses by ram (R).

(H:) Should I eat a red (=brown) one? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) He said: should I eat a black one? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat a white one? (R:) Whatever you want.

Then he (hyena) ran until he was some distance away. Then ram divided the sheep in halves (two subgroups), it told them (one group): you-Pl run to the house (=village)! They ran (=fled), before it (=hyena) came. It (=hyena) came back.

Again it (=hyena) was back with them,²⁸ it was sitting. (Hyena) said:

(H:) I will eat, I will eat. (R:) Yes!
 (H:) I will eat, I will eat here. (R:) Yes!

(H:) Should I eat two? (R:) Yes!
 (H:) Should I eat three? (R:) Yes!
 (H:) Should I eat four? (R:) Yes!
 (H:) Should I eat five? (R:) Yes!

(H:) Will I eat a red one? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Will I eat a black one? (R:) Whatever you want.
 (H:) Will I eat a white one? (R:) Whatever you want.

It (hyena) ran again, until it was some distance away. Ram (again) divided the (remaining) sheep into subgroups. He told them (one group): you-Pl run! They ran (fled).

Again they came together. Again it (hyena) said: are you-Pl here? (Ram:) Yes, we are here. (Hyena:) are you-Pl here? (Ram:) Yes, we are here. That ram was saying (that) to it (hyena). Again it (=hyena) said:

(H:) Should I eat one by one? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat two by two? (R:) Whatever pleases you.

²⁸ Lit. “encountered/coincided.”

(H:) Should I eat three by three? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat four by four? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat five by five? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat six by six? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat seven by seven? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) said: Should I eat eight by eight? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat nine by nine? (R:) Whatever pleases you.
 (H:) Should I eat ten by ten? (R:) Whatever pleases you.

It (=hyena) was gleeful.²⁹ Again it (=hyena) ran, until it was some distance away. After dividing the (remaining) sheep again (into two groups), (ram said:) you-Pl too, like the other group, run to the house (=village), before it (=hyena) comes (back)! They fled.

Again it (=hyena) came back. It said to ram, are you-Pl there? It said: uh-huh!
 (Hyena:) Are you-Pl there? (Ram:) Yes. (Hyena:) Are you-Pl there? (Ram:) Yes.

(H:) Should I eat a red (=brown) one? (R:) Whatever you want.
 (H:) Should I eat a black one? (R:) Whatever you want.
 (H:) Should I eat a white one? (R:) Whatever you want.

It (hyena) said: Are you-Pl there? Are you-Pl there? I((ram) said: Yes. Again it (ram) took (the sheep), it divided off another group. Again (ram said:) you-Pl run, before it (=heynta) comes (back).

It (=hyena) was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, until it realized that it had gone far away. Again it ran back, again it came, and found just one single ram, there it was, sitting.

(Hyena) said: are you-Pl there? It (ram) said: yes. (Hyena:) Are you there? Are you there? (Ram:) Yes.

(H:) Should I take two by two? (R:) Yes.
 (H:) Should I take three by three? (R:) Yes.
 (H:) Should I take four by four? (R:) Yes.
 (H:) Should I take five by five? (R:) Yes.

Again it (=hyena) ran until it was some distance away. Before he came back, (the) ram itself went. Then it (=hyena) ran and ran and ran and ran and ran and ran and ran and ran, it came, it came, it stopped.

²⁹ Lit. "pleasure went past (=was extreme) for it."

It found that the opening of the burrow was wide open (empty). When it found that the opening of the burrow was wide open, at once (it said:) are you-Sg there? Are you-Pl there? (There was) silence. (It said:) are you there? (There was) silence.

(Hyena) ran inside the burrow. When it ran inside the burrow, it found a sheep (ewe) who had (just) had a miscarriage. Right away it ran again, right away it followed in their (=other sheep's) tracks.

Now trot, trot, trot, trot, trot, trot, trot! It was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running. (The) ram was going into the village, hyena was approaching the edge of the village.

Then hyena went back, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running, it was running. It was approaching the opening of the burrow.

Its (=Hyena's) wife herself ate in the burrow (=ate the aborted fetus). She ate and was going outside. Then it (=Hyena) slapped the mouth (=face) of its wife, with its open hand (paw). Then one of her eyes jumped out.

It took it (=eye) and held it out and put it in his mouth. Chomp! Chomp! It chewed and put (it) down (=swallowed). It said: that now, that's useful (=tastes good).

The story and its tail are finished. All over!

2004-1a.08 Riddles

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A pleasing ring (when knocked).

Bo: A new (earthenware) waterjar.

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: (It's) hanging down dangling.

Bo: A bat says she is pregnant,³⁰ that which is in her belly (=womb) likewise says it is pregnant.

³⁰ lit. "has a belly."

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A long and straight able-bodied man.

Bo: <xxx> a road.

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: Open space...

Bo: ...a black lady.

Sa: The edge of an open space (with) a black lady.

Bo: Wild-pea shrub.³¹

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A mountaintop's turban.

Bo: Fog (=clouds hitting the mountain).

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A mountaintop's tears.

Bo: A water channel.

Sa: A (vertical) fracture (in the cliff) rather.

Bo: A fracture.

Sa: "Water channel" is too much (too broad).³²

Sa: Your-Pl riddle.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: Able-bodied man with a fork (split).

Bo: Able-bodied man with a fork (split)?

Sa: Able-bodied man with a fork (split).

Bo: A (shepherd's) staff with a hooked end.

Sa: You-Pl know (it).

2004-1a.09 The blind and crippled thieves (tale)

Sa: A tale.

Bo: Okay.

Sa: A story of (about) thieves., A blind man and a cripple, it's they [focus] who were thieves. They were going together. One day, when they were going around, they went to a man's field.

They were breaking off (grain spikes of) the millet of (=in) his field. They lit a fire, they were roasting the millet (grain spikes) lightly on the fire. Some (of it) they munched on, some (=the rest) they held on to (as) they were going along.

³¹ *Boscia senegalensis*.

³² "water channel" denotes any channel, whether on the mountain or in the plains, so this answer is less precise than the correct one.

It was the blind man [focus] who—, who was breaking off and bringing (millet). It was the cripple [focus] who was looking out, (in) the direction that the owners of the field would come from. Well, just that [focus] was their work. They were performing their work, they were doing (it).

If the owner of the field came, if he (=cripple) saw that he (=owner) was coming, the cripple would tell the blind man: well, the owner of the field is coming! The owner of the field is coming!

(Then) slowly (=quietly) going around (=changing direction), they would go (away) crawling (=sneaking). It was the blind man [focus] who would hold up (=carry) the cripple (on his shoulder), then he (cripple) would go showing the way to him (blind man). Well, it was like that.

One day, before they saw (him), the owner of the field approached. The cripple was afraid of speaking his voice (=out loud). So, as for the cripple, he went away crawling. The blind man was (still) sitting there, blithely unaware.

Yes. (Blind man) said: Cripple! Cripple! Hey! The millet tree (=stem), where is it? (Hey) you, pick it (=grain) off and bring it! (To himself:) Ah, he (=cripple) has (=must have) gone to cut off (millet grain spikes).³³

Bo: <xxx>

Sa: He (=blind man) was just sitting there, blithely unaware. The owner of the field cut off his (flexible) tree branch (as a whip) and was coming.

Then, when he looked and put (=struck) the stick in the middle of the blind man's back, the blind man jumped to his feet with a crunching sound. (Then) he (=blind man) realized that this one (next to him) was not his second (=his colleague) that he had brought (with him).

When he (owner) put it (=struck him with it) again, he (blind man) penetrated (=went thrashing around) among those millet plants. Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! Crunch! [sound of stepping] As for him (blind man), he said (=figured) he had gone a long way. Well, then they (=blind man and cripple) called out to each other (=communicated) by whistling.

Tweet! [sound of whistle] Then the owner of the field said to him, (I hear) whistling, you-Pl are there! Tweet! They (=whistles) met each other. When the owner of the field looked and put it on his back with the whip, at once he (=blind man) ran away.

Now he (=blind man) was just fleeing, he wasn't stopping at all. Then the owner of the field said: whistling, phooey! The blind man said (=thought): even if he plays the flute, I sure as hell won't come!

They kept going around. After that, they (=blind man and cripple) saw each other. (Blind man) said: How could this be? What have I done?

(Cripple) said: the owner of the field had come (too) close. I could not run! If I spoke to you (=blind man), we would not get away! As for me, dragging myself along slowly (=quietly) to get out, I was lying low (e.g. hiding among the bushes), I could not run at all, instead I was lying low, I could see that they were whipping you. I could see that you were running. Well, as for me...

³³ Since the cripple doesn't reply, the blind man assumes he has gone off to another part of the field to break off millet spikes.

Doing thus, doing whatchamacallit, they escaped (“got their heads”). Well, in that way, they too did the work (=did what they did).
The story and its tail are finished.

2004-1a.10 Snakes, reptiles, elephants (description)

Sa: Well, python,³⁴ now, they are asking you (the way) how it is.

Bo: Python, it’s big, it’s marked (blotched), red (brown) and black. It is pretty, it’s peaceful (harmless to humans). It’s also long.

Sa: How (=what) is its dwelling (habitat).³⁵

Bo: It’s dwelling is in the water.

Sa: It’s dwelling is in the water.

Bo: Its dwelling is in the water. If now the water is finished (=dried up), it hibernates in a hole.

Sa: Well, (turning to) spitting cobra now,³⁶ what is it like?

Bo: Spitting cobra. Spitting cobra isn’t very long. The male, its neck has red (brown) around it.³⁷ It is black, jet black. When it sees somebody, it takes its neck and widens and flattens it like this, then it bends its head (forward) and heaves a long jet of spit. A hole—, it’s in a hole, that’s its place (dwelling).

Sa: (Is it) a nasty thing (=dangerous)?

Bo: It’s nasty. If its saliva gets into the eye(s) of a person, he’ll become blind.

Sa: <xxx>

Bo: He’ll become blind.

Sa: So, a remedy.

Bo: Indeed, a remedy. Curdled milk, or else sugar.

Sa: That (=eyes) will get better (for him).

Bo: Then it will get better for him.

Sa: After that, (talk about) viper too.³⁸

Bo: Viper, it now, it is thin, it is short, it is marked (spotted). It’s markings have no character (are unattractive).

Sa: Its body.

Bo: Its body, you (might) say, its (colored) like fabric dye,³⁹ it’s rough(-skinned).

Sa: Indeed.

³⁴ *Python sebae*.

³⁵ Lit. ‘staying place’.

³⁶ *Naja nigricollis*, perhaps also including the very similar *N. katiensis*. Lit. “black snake.”
The Egyptian cobra (*N. haje*) is not a spitter.

³⁷ Lit. “it is red, it is tied.”

³⁸ Primarily *Echis ocellatus*, but may also extend to other small vipers (*Echis leucogaster* which prefers montane habitats, perhaps also the sand viper *Cerastes vipera* if locally present). For *Bitis*, see below.

³⁹ Primarily the yellow dye used (along with brown) in native bogolan (cotton fabric).

Bo: That one is definitely nasty (=dangerous). When it coils up here, it jumps (=lashes out) until it has gone a long distance. It keeps slides along (side-winding), it doesn't run (=go) in a straight line. Viper is like that.

Sa: And it breathes (puffs, hisses).

Bo: It breathes.

Sa: I've heard that. After that, long colubrid snake(s).⁴⁰

Bo: Tree snake. That one, if you see it, there are two kinds of long colubrid snake. As for the (first) one, it's whitish (light-colored). That one is bigger, that one is longer.

The (other) one now, it's thin, it's marked (=striped), red (brown), sulphur (i.e. yellow), and black. But as soon as you see it, it swooshes like a bullet and goes past.

Sa: It's black (dark).

Bo: It's very rapid. It is like that (by nature). It goes into the water, it goes (up) into trees, it goes into holes.

Sa: It is like that (by nature).

Bo: It is like that (by nature).

Sa: Now (about) the way whiptail lizards are, or monitor lizards.

Bo: Puff adder⁴¹ isn't finished.

Sa: Puff adder.

Bo: Puff adder. It's short and thick. It has a wide head. It too, it's a dangerous thing like the viper. It's thick-skinned. It's red (brown) and black (dark), marked (blotched), but those markings of it are not pretty. It flies (=lunges), that one (does). That one, if it has gotten hot (=angry), if it has come (=is out in the open), it raises itself from the sand (=ground) and (goes) swoosh! and it goes and lands hard (on the ground).

Sa: It raises itself from the sand.

Bo: It raises itself from all of the sand. It goes out of a hole and goes down hitting the ground. It raises itself from the sand, but (the extent to which) it is nasty, this thing is nasty, it (by nature) is there (=what I've said), it is there.

Sa: (They asked about) Nile monitor lizards⁴² and whiptail lizards, the way they are.

Bo: Nile monitor lizards and whiptail lizards, they have four feet. They have no hair (fur). They have a tail. Their head, moreover, is just like a snake's head. You would say it is like a python's head, it's like that.

As for the Nile monitor lizard, it's marked too. White, with small spots, red (brown), (and) black (dark). It's monitor lizard [focus] that is marked like that.

⁴⁰ *Psammophis elegans* and *P. (sibilans) phillipsi*. The first is arboreal, has clearly marked longitudinal stripes, and has a narrow head adapted to taking eggs. The second is terrestrial (often entering villages), lacks clear longitudinal stripes, and has a slightly broader head. Both are long and thin-bodied. These are not the only colubrids in the zone but they are the most common.

⁴¹ Tentatively identified as *Bitis arietans*, another viper. Very potent venom, though it is not quick to attack humans. Shorter and thicker than *Echis* spp., with a large triangular head.

⁴² *Varanus niloticus*, the local aquatic monitor lizard.

Sa: Its dwelling.

Bo: Its dwelling (is) in the water.

Sa: Whiptail lizard.⁴³

Bo: Whiptail lizard. It too is light-colored. It is thick-skinned. Furthermore, it has its little markings. Its markings, a person doesn't (=can't) know it well. You see (=notice) its roughness (coarse skin) more than its markings. Furthermore, its roughness increases (its size), though it doesn't equal (in size) a monitor lizard.

Sa: It doesn't equal a monitor lizard in size.

Bo: It doesn't equal a monitor lizard in size.

Sa: Its dwelling, where does it dwell ("sit")?

Bo: That now, its dwelling, it digs a hole and it stays (in it). It stays in an old termite mound, that is its dwelling.

Sa: The remaining snakes (and reptiles) now, do they dig their (own) burrow(s), (or) do they not dig (them)?

Bo: The remaining snakes? As for them, they go into a (pre-existing) hole, but they don't dig.

Sa: It's an old hole.

Bo: It's an old hole. They can't dig by themselves.⁴⁴

Sa: They can't dig.

Z:⁴⁵ Do they lay ("put down") eggs? (Or) do they bear (their) young?

Bo: They all lay eggs.

Sa: They lay eggs.

Bo: All of them, it is egg-laying. When they have laid eggs, then the Nile monitor lizard buries (the eggs). The whiptail, for its part, digs inside (the) hole (=burrow), it too lays (eggs) there. But as for that one, it goes into the hole constantly, it goes in and comes out constantly. Inside that (hole), whether it buries (eggs), or whether it doesn't bury them, that I don't know.

Sa: It lays (eggs) in the hole, it buries (them), it buries (them) out of view,⁴⁶ then it (=egg) hatches there.

Bo: It hatches there. A python, as for it, it lays and lays (lots of eggs) together, like inside the hole. Deep inside the hole. Like a pile, it lays it (=eggs) together in a heap, it puts (them) on top of each other, everything will be rolled up (massed) together.

Sa: (Eggs) with each other.

⁴³ *Uromastyx (acanthinurus) geyri*.

⁴⁴ lit. "with their own head."

⁴⁵ A third speaker joins in.

⁴⁶ Lit. "bury (and) cause to be lost" (i.e. to the view).

Bo: With each other. Like cow manure, if you like, you will lift it up like that, then you will put it down again.⁴⁷ Well, (python eggs do) thus until it--, when they are ready to hatch, they will hatch there and go out, they will leave the shell, because they (eggs) are tied, they are tied together thus. That is (how) it (=python) lays (eggs).

Z: Does a python lay lots of eggs? Or a few?

Bo: A python lays lots of eggs indeed!

Sa: It lays a lot of eggs.

Z: Now you have finished speaking.

Sa: It is finished.

Bo: <xxx>

Sa: It's finished.

Bo: It's finished.

Sa: Elephant.

Bo: Elephant. An elephant is big, an enormous thing above.⁴⁸ Its middle (=torso), you can't describe (it) with that. Like, the front is bigger than the back, it's like that, when squatting (=resting), over there (=its front) is bigger.

Its ear, it attains (the size of) a little prayer mat. Its arm (=trunk), it now, it's as though⁴⁹ a young man is standing in front of it. Its tooth (=tusk), (for) some (of them), they now, it's as though (something) like a cow's horn is in the way. It (=tusk) is up ("put up") next to its hand (=trunk).

But (when) it goes, you won't see (=notice) the fact that its foot is bent (moving). It's swaying from side to side, just swaying. If not for (the fact that) it is tilting (to the sides), you don't know (=notice) that its foot is bending (moving) like this, much less do you hear the noise of its feet. It just goes lumbering along (slowly).

Sa: Have you-Pl seen a wild animal⁵⁰ bigger than that, or haven't you?

Bo: We haven't seen any wild animal bigger than that.

⁴⁷ Manure is mixed with water for fertilizer, or to add to earth in making bricks. The speaker is using an analogy to describe the consistency of the egg mass.

⁴⁸ I.e. the head and trunk.

⁴⁹ lit. "won't you say ...?"

⁵⁰ lit. "bush's thing."

Sa: Anything more powerful?

Bo: We also haven't seen any wild animal more powerful than it.

Sa: So, the woodland belongs to it.

Bo: The woodland indeed belongs to it. We haven't seen anything bigger than it, (and) we haven't seen anything more powerful than it.

Z: Does it eat grass, or doesn't it?

Bo: It eats grass. It eats trees (=tree leaves). It eats grass (and) it eats trees.