

Weekly African Proverbs

From Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya, collected and explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha, Research Committee, Maryknoll Lanuage School, P.O. Box 298, Musoma, Tanzania.

Kuria: Amaanche ngakaahea gatuke tegakweeba waabo hai.

* English: The water, which boils, does not forget its home.

* Meaning: When you pour the water out, it flows as a small stream-This proverb is used to show that the behavior of a person depends greatly on how he/she was brought up.

Kuria: Mosaacha oheene mewe akwibora iriraasi.

* English: A true person is th eone who gives birth to a foolish child.

* Meaning. There is no guarantee that an honored man must beget responsible and honorable children. (The Devil was once the Angel)

Kuria: Umuuya ndimwi mukwigama nawe egesara omomanya nonobeebe boyo beene.

* English: A good person once you shwer shelter with him under the bush you will know him, and bad one as well.

* Meaning: Sharing is the best wat to understand each other.

Kuria: Omogera ngomanyere hano gokogeera.

* English: Stream, it knows where to flow.

* Meaning: There is a particular way of doing things right.

Kuria: Geteatubere is gituuba nyinya.

* English: If it doesn't resemble dad, it resembles mum.

* Meaning: Children take after their parents, not only in looks but also in character.

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From a Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs. Getia/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania. Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with the help of Max Tetrais, M. Afr. (1999)

Sumbwa: Kufila mubayanda ulakumbwa kukula bagozya. Kufia kwa watoto watakushangaa ukubwa wa uume.

* English Translation: An adult should avoid any scandalous behavior in front of children, otherwise, he will be made fun of him.

* English Meaning: Kids can't discern the evil in their elders, they are used to sacralise their greatness.

Sumbwa: Kwikuzya nsabo ilakutunukila ukumshibisha mtu anakupasukia.

* English Translation: Kindness is not so often recognised: don't expect gratitude immediately.

* English Meaning: God will thank you on behalf of stupid consumers of your kindness.

Sumbwa: Lilekayo ikwaba lye buhaya biashara ya uhayani ni kuchumia huko.

* English Translation: Don't imitate everything you observed in town; better to avoid that home.

* English Meaning: Be prudent with whatever you discover in the street. Respect your home.

Sumbwa: Wepe te mugisa mweupe kama mshipa.

* English Translation: A cord is completely naked. A poor man or woman is like that.

* English Meaning: He reached the last degree of penury.

From A Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi, October, 2003.

Urugo ntirwinjira mu rundi.

* Translation: A fence does not enter another.

* Meaning: A spouse should not have an affair with his/her neighbor

Igiti umuntu aturira ntakirangamira.

* Translation: You don't look upwards at a tree that you know you are not supposed to climb.

* Meaning: One is not supposed to have lustful thoughts for what he/she has no right to (with allusion to someone else's spouse or possessions).

Umugore ntasutamanga aba ashaka imyuga ibiri.

* Translation: A woman does not sit on her toes unless she wants to develop two careers.

* Meaning: A woman is supposed to avoid any behavior that would arouse men's sexual desires.

Igiti kigororwa kikiri gito.

* Translation: A tree is straightened while it is still young.

* Meaning: It is easy to correct children's behaviors when they are still young.

Urera nabi ugatukwa n'abakwe.

* Translation: Failure to bring up correctly your child leads to being insulted by the sons-in-law.

* Meaning: Bad upbringing leads to disgrace.

Umbundu

Adages and Conundrums

W.H. Sanders

1914

West Central Africa

Ca lile ombambi ca tunda kutue wayo.

The horn that called together the hunt destructive to olombambi grew out of the ombambi's head.

Your own doings destroyed you.

Ca linga mbui ci lungisa ava va yua.

No smoke without a fire. Small matter may cause a stampede.

Ca mane ci ti, Mbanje; ka ci ti, Mopie.

Do not mix in others' quarrels nor speak of them afterwards.

Ca neta tupu hamo elemba ci kuete.

Though in general excellent it has a blemish. Fly in the ointment.

**A Collection of Umbundu Proverbs,
Adages and Conundrums
W. H. Sanders
1914
West Central Africa Mission**

Asuelela ka yukisa onganja.
Useless to cry over spilled milk. (mourn for dead &c.)

Atemo a Ngola tu limbukila vulengo.
Proof of the pudding is in the eating. (Gola is the Tubal-cain of blacksmiths).

Atulo koviti, asikilo komanu.
Loads are deposited against trees; lodgings are obtained from people.

Ca fa ca topa; omalanga yi papelela vombandua yohosi.
The dead are no longer terrible.

Apa pa fila ombia hapo oviyo vi siala.
Influence and memory abide after death. Leaving some dead enemies, killed before they succeeded in despatching you.

Apa wa lila ka peli onima.
There is no pay due the eater. (Said to a caller who hangs around too long after he has been given refreshments).

Ewe Proverbs (West Africa-Benin, Ghana,Togo)

Fu kple dzidzɔ la nɔviwo wonye.
Literal Translation: 'Suffering and happiness are twins'.
Moral Teaching: Life is a mixture of joy and suffering and so we must learn to accept both, and the acceptance of both is a sign of maturity.

Agalã be ne yele axa dzi zɔm hã menye mɔ yebu o.
Literal Translation: 'The crab says that when you see it walking clumsily it does not mean that it has lost its way'.
Moral Teaching: This proverb can be used by anybody whose actions are misunderstood, to warn those who judge him that he has not forgotten the essential principles that guide his behaviour. The proverb warns against the practice of misjudging the basic principles that guide the behaviour of people.

Kɔdzo Dei be yele Blu fiam gakeyeɓe ñku le Ewegbe ñu.
Literal Translation: 'Kodzo Dei—the Paramount Chief of Peki—says that he is speaking Twi but he has not forgotten that Ewe is his mother tongue'.
Moral Teaching: As in proverb above.

Baḅa medoa kalê ha ḅa o.

Literal Translation: 'A cripple does not start a war song'.

Explanation: Usually when war songs are sung they arouse a fighting spirit in men or arouse them to do some daring deeds; thus the leader of the song must be strong enough to take part in any war-like activity that may follow the singing. A cripple can lead a war song but cannot take part in the war-like activities that may follow from it and this will expose his infirmity.

Moral Teaching: 'A Cripple starting a war song means a person who claims certain qualities that he does not have and such people's empty claims are exposed in due time. This proverb is, therefore, a warning against empty boasting and recommending the virtue of humility.

ÚutÇtrÇ ñue wotrÇa ýeḅuḅu ḅo.

Literal Translation: 'You change your steps according to the change in the rhythm of the drum'.

Explanation: During the course of drumming and dancing the rhythm of the leading drum causes the steps of the dancers to change.

Moral Teaching: Adapt yourself and your conduct to changing circumstances and do not be unreasonably rigid in your thinking and behaviour.

Ne tekpoḅoe mekpÇ eḅokui fe geme o la meḅoa ñku o

Literal Translation: 'Tekpoḅoe, which is a small roundish yam, always assesses its sprouting ability before it does so'.

Moral Teaching: Know what you can do well and do just that and do not attempt what is beyond your powers.

Devi ḅÇ ame tsitsi kuku efe ta ḅe wòbuna ḅe eme.

Literal Translation: 'The head of a child who wears an adult's hat is always all covered up to his face'. The truth of this experience is used to teach children not to attempt what is beyond their powers.

Asi tu nyede metua agÇḅÇ o.

Literal Translation: 'The hand can be used to pull out the tender branch of a date-palm, but cannot be used to pull out the tender branch of a fanpalm'. The branches of a fanpalm are tougher and rougher than those of the datepalm.

Moral Teaching: Do not presume that because you can do certain things therefore you can do everything. Be modest in the estimation of your powers.

Agbe nyañe (ḅÇe) metia agbetÇ o.

Literal Translation: 'The man with a miserable life is never tired of it'.

Moral Teaching: Appreciate what you have by knowing its real value and do not undervalue it through unhealthy comparison.

Lã si le arnegbÇ lã lolo woyÇna net

Literal Translation: 'The game that you miss, i.e. runs away from a hunter, is always a big one'.

Moral Teaching: There is always a tendency to over-value things that we want but we do not have, and so this proverb is warning against the danger of over-valuing the real worth of what we want badly but cannot get. We must rather learn to appreciate whatever we have.

**From Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs
collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi**

Akanyoni katagurutse ntikamenya iyo bweze

Translation: A bird cannot know where the sorghum is ready (to eat) unless it flies

Meaning: A lazy person is not aware of opportunities

Intrinda irandura

Translation: He who is not careful gets contaminated (by communicable diseases or bad behavior

Meaning: Carelessness has devastating consequences on one's life e.g HIV/AIDS

Impene mbi ntuyizirikako iyawe

Translation: You don't tie up your goat on a bad goat

Meaning: It is advised not to develop a relationship with a person of questionable behavior for fear of being negatively influenced by him/her

Ubana na suneba ugasuneba nka we

Translation: When you stay with a careless person, you end up becoming careless just like him/her

Meaning: Bad behavior is contagious

Akagabo karaje ukuguru hanze kitwa Imburanmutima

Translation: A man who spends his leg outside (his house) is called "Heartless"

Meaning: A man who spends the night away (with allusion to adultery) has no honor

Burira ntibutera ku mpeshi

Translation: The night does not last until the good season

Meaning: Everything has its beginning and end

N'iritagira inkoko riraca

Translation: A night without roosters will still end

Meaning: Hope does not necessarily have to be based on tangible signs

Inahasi y'umutindi yamubujije kwiyahura

Translation: The unlucky man's hope prevented him from committing suicide

Meaning: Hope leads to a successful and victorious life

Ivya gusa bitera ubwenge buke

Translation: Free things decrease one's intelligence

Meaning: Giving material things to someone without challenging him/her to work creates in him/her the dependency syndrome

Amazi masabano ntamara imvyiro

Translation: Water aid does not remove completely the dirt

Meaning: Working hard is more rewarding than depending on handouts

Ubumwe buramota

Translation: Cohesion embalms

Meaning: Concord has beneficial effects

Aho ishari ritari agashato ka Rukawavu gakwira bane

Translation: Where there is no jealousy a small hare's leather is enough to cover four people

Meaning: Where there is no jealousy people are able to share the little they have

Aho Uburundi butunze urutoke hubakwa inzu
Translation: Wherever Burundi points the finger, a house is built
Meaning: In harmony, everything succeeds

Isinzi ntibesha
Translation: The crowd does not lie
What the majority agrees on in one accord is trustworthy and acceptable

Nta witanga Imama kwihebura (guhebura)
Translation: You don't give up to despair before God
Meaning: One should keep hope in whatever situation or circumstance even when it seems to be beyond human control or understanding, for everything is possible with God

Oromo (Ethiopia) Proverbs **Collected by Fr. George Cotter M.M.**

Bunaaf mooti afaan duwaa hindubbisan
Translation: Coffee and the king, with the mouth alone they do not talk (with coffee one should take food and for a king one should bring a gift)
Meaning: A person should know when a gift is fitting

Mootin torba / odu wal hinqabu
Translation: Kings seven (by themselves) the news of each other do not have.
Meaning: Leaders do not always know what other leaders are doing

Aariin ijolle ormaa / hidhi gajjallaa nama guba
Translation: Anger at the child of another the lip on the bottom a person burns
Meaning: A person becomes irritated about something he cannot correct

Nama hamaa duuti lama
Translation: The person who is cruel dies twice (by his cruelty he has already died socially, then he dies a natural death)
Meaning: To live happily with others one must avoid cruelty

Karaa mana biraa fuudhani / dubbii afaanirra fuudhu
Translation: The road at one's house is taken, the news from people's mouth one catches
Meaning: Everything has a beginning

Sumbwa Proverbs from the Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania,
Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with the help of Max Tertrais, M. Afr. in conjunction with Sukuma Research Committee
Sukuma Cultural Centre, Bujora
P.O. Box 76
Mwanza, Tanzania
April 1999

Muviti we mvula alazanzya ne malunde mgema wa mvua alikutana na mawingu

English translation: The expert of rain, rainmaker, would like to prove his skillfulness by good luck, the clouds just come up!

English meaning: This rainmaker didn't make any liturgy for getting a storm, but the rain comes up without expectation.

Nkobe yalina hitale yagila nyani imepanda kwenye mwamba ajivune sasa

English translation: The monkey has the good luck to climb high in the trees where he can despise all the wild beasts

English meaning: Those who get good luck and huge wealth in no time, quickly change character and walk around with great pretensions!

Kubikila mti mwikungi kusanga gwa katiwe kutunza mti porini utaukuta umekatwa

English translation: You can have found a beautiful object which seems ownerless; you dream that it will be yours! Tomorrow, another thought, the same...

English Meaning: You are the only one alone to dream after richness, the competition is general. Always you be left behind.

Ilale lya mzobe liliho ali lye mlyele litaliho hakuna shamba la mgonjwa, lakni la mvivu lipo

English translation: A sick man cannot work, he is in bed. A lazy man doesn't like to dirty his hands, he prefers to steal others' harvest.

English meaning: There is a big difference between a sick person and a lazy one; one is really poor, the other is always a thief.

Kwimbila nzibe kula mimbo kuimbia kiziwi ni kumaliza wimbo

English Translation: Try to talk and to counsel a turbulent person, you will lose your time, he doesn't listen

English Meaning: A superactive person is not so easy to be addressed. His turbulence disturbs his mind and he cannot listen to you

Habukuru habwilindilo uzeeni ni sehemu

English Translation: When you get old, it is a good time for mutual understanding, your maturity is appreciated by your interlocutors, at least old people

English Meaning: Old age is the best for maturity and experience. Your equals are fond of it. But the new generation despises it!

Minso gatari ne luvumba macho hayana mpaka

English Translation: Your eyes look far away more than the real power of your whole body

English Meaning: Your look, your dreams, your eyes or your intelligence runs faster quickly than your whole person. Any project can be finalized by the mind, before any execution.

Kkusonfya kutani kulumanga kuchovya siyo kula bila mboga

English Translation: To soak the mouthful in the sauce even though there is no steak, it is not too bad. You ought to be thankful, anyway!

English Meaning: Don't be exigent! Be thankful for any gift, however small.

Kisumbwa: Nkoso ikulyanga ikufulilizya panya huuma huku akipuliza

English translation: Some people want to be among your best friends, but they are hypocrites, they meditate about what kind of trouble they could prepare in your house.

English meaning: Choose your friends attentively, among them can be a crook, well dressed and so polite.

Kisumbwa: Kuzya bwigili kwenda jumla kama ngili.

English translation: They are people who get invitation, but they haven't the nuptial robe (politeness) they eat then escape without thanks.

English meaning: Elementary kindness asks for gratitude to be expressed clearly and publically.

Kisumbwa: Mfumbi kwata mti tuakawata mtu ugonjwa kamata mti, usikamate mtu.

English translation: A person who is used to bad behavior, push him away, he will contaminate you.

English meaning: Fear this no-recommendable person, he would pull you out of your boots.

Lugbara (Uganda) Proverbs Collected by Albert Dalfovo and John S. Mbiti (1996)

Okporovu ma apitre 'ba ni.

Translation: The satiety of a pregnant woman is a child.

Explanation: A woman reaches personal happiness and psychological fulfillment in motherhood to which she thus naturally tends.

Mi o'buka ba nju mani.

Translation: Your o'buka strap left its marks on me.

Explanation: A mother reminds her child of the hardships she endured in rearing him/her up. The o'buka is an apparatus for carrying the baby on one's back.

Mi ru ta ti; mi ru ama pa ko ra.

Translation: I tolerated you in vain; you will clasp my foot.

Explanation: This proverb is said by a parent who has been very patient with an unruly child, but to no avail. One day, however, such child will need to apologize and mend his/her ways.

Ayia nduri ozuku fi ni.

Translation: A different mother is the intestine of the porcupine.

Explanation: The intestine of a porcupine is bitter. Likewise a stepmother: she tends to be harsh with the family children who are not her offspring.

Aku ni nji agupi si.

Translation: A home carries weight because of the husband.

Explanation: People tend to show little consideration for a home without a husband. His presence, on the other hand, guarantees respect for everybody in it.

Aku ma ediafe agupi ni.

Translation: The man is the central pole of the house.

Explanation: Traditional houses have a central pole supporting the roof and keeping the building in place. Man has the same task in the family.

Agupi ni dra oli a, oku ni dra jo a.

Translation: A man dies in the open, a woman indoors.

Explanation: A woman escapes from danger into the house while a man faces it at the risk of his life. The husband is the defender of the home.

Agupi ni dra malo ndu.

Translation: A man dies under the mahogany tree.

Explanation: In case of danger, women and children flee while man stands his ground. The hardness of the mahogany (Khaya, anthotheca) emphasizes the stamina and courage that the husband needs to have in defending his family.

Andre iri yo.

Translation: There are no two mothers.

Explanation: Nobody can substitute the tenderness and dedication of one's mother. The real mother is one.

Ayia ma ndu yo.

Translation: There is no other mother.

Explanation: One cannot expect the loving attitude of one's mother in any other person. One's mother is unique.

Proverbs in the Ewe Language (Ghana, West Africa)

Vi dzro nu medzroa golo þe azi o.

Literal Translation: 'A beggar can beg for certain things but cannot beg for an ostrich's egg'.

Explanation: The egg of an ostrich is rare and therefore very difficult to get. Moral Teaching: Do not be overambitious..

Ðevi ka akple gã mekaa nya gã o.

Literal Translation: 'A child can swallow a big morsel of akple (i.e. cornmeal food) but cannot swallow big matters'.

Explanation: A child can handle easy matters but cannot handle serious ones because his experience is limited; therefore he should limit himself to easier matters and should not presume that he can handle serious matters.

Moral Teaching: Do not be overambitious..

Ðadi vi afi vi wòlena.

Literal Translation: 'A kitten can catch only a baby mouse'.

Moral Teaching: Always do what you can and have a realistic estimation of your abilities. Avoid overestimation of your powers.

WometsÇa deku eve dea alÇgo ðeka me o.

Literal Translation: 'You cannot crack two palmnuts in the mouth at the same time'.

Explanation: It is easier to crack one palmtree of a special oil-palm tree than to crack two with the teeth.

Moral Teaching: Do not try to do too much at once. Learn to do one thing at a time.

Ne tekpoðoe mekpÇ eðokui fe geme o la meðoa ñku o

Literal Translation: 'Tekpoðoe, which is a small roundish yam, always assesses its sprouting ability before it does so'.

Moral Teaching: Know what you can do well and do just that and do not attempt what is beyond your powers.

Swahili Proverbs from East Africa compiled by Leonidas Kalugila, Scandanivian Institute of African Studies, Uppsala, 1977.

Aachaye kweli huirudia (m.y. Afanyaye mema mahali fulani arudipo hupokelewa vizuri).

He who leaves truth behind, returns to it (i.e. a person who does something good somewhere, when he comes back people receive him/her with gladness).

Aambiwaye akakataa hujionea mwenyewe.

He who refuses to be warned, sees himself/herself the consequence.

Abakiaye mekoni ndiye huzima moto.

He who remains near the fire-place is the one who puts out the fire.

Afadhali akutembeleaye kuliko akutumiaye salaam.

The one who visits you is better than the one who sends you greetings.

Afadhali kuaibika kuliko kufa (Bukoba).

Better ashamed than dead (Bukoba).

Ewe Proverbs from Cape Coast, Ghana compiled by N.K. Dzobo

Tsi melee adeýenÇ wonyana o.

Literal Translation: 'It is difficult to tell whether a swimmer is drowning or not'.

Explanation: Fishermen are usually good swimmers and it is taken for granted that they will never be drowned and so even if they are drowning the onlookers may take their struggle to save themselves as a performance of some new swimming strokes and will not make any attempt to save them.

Moral Teaching: Those who say that they are steady morally should be careful lest they fall.

Agbonyila medÇa akÇlçe o.

Literal Translation: 'The keeper of a ram does not take a nap'.

Moral Teaching: The _expression 'agbonyila' i.e. 'the keeper of a ram' stands for 'a person who is doing something very very important' and such a person cannot afford to be engaged in trifles. This proverb is used to remind people to concentrate on achieving worthwhile goals and not to be distracted by any personal weaknesses.

Atie nÇa agbe hafi ka vuna ðe eñu.

Literal Translation: 'It is a living tree that has vines around it'.

Moral Teaching: This proverb may be used to teach a person who has many friends because of his favourable economic situation to be watchful because his friends may desert him when he becomes poor. Do not forget yourself in time of your success.

KuviarÇ meñlÇa mÇ to o.

Literal Translation: 'A lazy man does not make a farm close to the footpath'. (if he does so he will be advertising his own laziness.)

Moral Teaching: Do not foolishly advertise your weaknesses but rather put your best foot forward.

Dadi metsana lã fufui si o.

Literal Translation: 'The cat does not go into a meat trade,' (if it does it will eat up the meat and the meat trade will collapse.)

Moral Teaching: This proverb is also advising on the adoption of the right and realistic attitude.

Bassa (Liberian) Proverbs and Biblical Communication compiled and explained by Abba G. Karnga. (Note: In this collection, Karnga draws parallels between traditional Liberian proverbs and Judeo-Christian teachings).

NYONNON-SOA SE-DEH KON NI, OH KONNON DIO-DYOA.

Translation: The Old Lady might seem to have nothing, yet, she has her "Dio-Dyoà."

Explanation: The dio-dyoa is a precious seed of a certain tree, used to cure skin diseases, but it is uncommon except found with a few aged women. In the Christian context, the dio-dyoa could be likened unto the prayer of an old Christian woman.

NYON-VEHNNEHN SE VONON BEHIN, KEH OH DYUO GBAA KA.

Translation: The Elder is unable to fight, but he has a rich experience for struggles.

Explanation: This proverb is a response to a young person who might think that he could beat an old man in a fight. The Elders are not strong physically as the young men, but can fight in many ways to even sabotage the progress of any young man in life. On the other hand, victory in the battle of life can be won only by those who believe in the wisdom of the Old Christian Bible.

SO-GEHN NI CHEH-EH OH DEH XWA.

Translation: Chicken egg cannot turn its hen over.

Explanation: This is an advice to some young people who by their book knowledge, might claim to know better than their parents. This proverb can also be a lesson to many Christians who instead of begging God to forgive them by His grace, they tell God what they want Him to do for them.

NYON-VEHNNEHN MON MU-DEDEIN BOHKE. OH KU DYOH-HWODO.

Translation: An Elder is a bath-tub, it restrains laughter.

Explanation: As the bath-tub cannot expose any secret of us who stand before it daily, so is the Elder in the community in whom you confide your private problems. Similar to that is the God of the Bible, who knows all the private problems and sins of all peoples, but He never made them a figure of fun.

DAH JWEHN-DE NI CHANNAAN, BOEH KOEH KPON-EHNIN DYI.

Translation: Ants are fused around where there is a greasy palm nut.

Explanation: Relatives and friends of a wealthy man used the opportunity of being members of the family or friends of the rich man to converge on him until he is broke. But when his avenue of wealth is closed, no more relatives or friends, can be seen around him.

Proverbs in the Ga or Accra language (Ghana). These are taken from a collection compiled by Richard F. Burton in 1865 and reprinted in 1969 by Negro Universities Press. ISBN 8371-1378 4

Alomte efon miau bo.

The cat does not cease to cry " miau."

Ka foo loflo.

A crab does not beget a bird.

Silafo etsoo filafo gbe.

A blind man does not show the way to a blind man.

Kole nya nson.

The Kole (River) flows into the sea.

N.B.-This is quoted as we say, "Walls (or winds) have ears," warning people not to speak out their secrets.

Nme kome fiteo nmei fe.

One (bad) nut spoils all.

From Collection of Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs Collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi, October 2003.

Iyikuburiye ntikurya

Translation: A dog cannot bite you when it has warned you.

Meaning: One is not likely to fall into the trap of his enemy when the latter has warned him/her.

Ingoma yagukanze irahuma ugahunga

Translation: When a drum that used to scare you is drumming, you have to run away.

Meaning: It is wise to recognize the signs of danger.

Akataretse kaba gasema

Translation: If a strange happening keeps occurring, it is a bad omen.

Meaning: Certain behaviors are obvious signs of death or danger. Stubbornness leads to negative consequences in the end.

Ijambo rigukunze riguma mu nda.

Translation: The word that loves you stays in the belly.

Meaning: Bad words should not be spoken.

Ntawuvuga yose nk'uwuraga.

Translation: One does not say everything as if he or she is dying.

Meaning: Not every truth is worthy to be said.

Proverbs in the Ewe Language (West Africa)

Amedzro (dzrovi) metsoa ame kuku fe tagbÇ o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A stranger does not hold the head of a coffin.'

(b) Explanation: In some villages people are not all buried in one common graveyard. Sometimes the type of death a person dies determines where the body should be buried and usually those who hold the head of the coffin know where the body will be sent for burial. A person who is new to a village community cannot know this, he needs time to learn it.

Ñukpe ta gbolowÇla toa xÇ xa.

(a) Literal Translation: 'It is because of shame that the harlot does not use the main street of a village'.

(b) Explanation: Harlotry is one of the social evils in the traditional society and its practice produces a sense of guilt which is regarded as a punishment to those who indulge in it.

(c) Moral Teaching: Evil behaviour has its own punishment, i.e. it does not pay in the long run to misbehave and therefore people must refrain from doing evil and learn to do good.

Hlofiwulae (Úlofiwulae) sea kpododo.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The person who steals mushrooms hears the evening announcement'.

(b) Explanation: In the villages people who have found their crops or any personal belongings stolen cause an announcement to be made in the evening about the stolen crops or articles. In the announcement they ask the thieves to return the stolen goods or else they will be handed over to the gods for punishment. Usually they mention the name of a powerful god who is believed to invariably kill all evildoers. Thieves therefore listen carefully to the evening announcement and they also dread it. It may happen that someone has stolen some crops and his guilty conscience will cause him to behave as if he had heard an announcement about the crops he has stolen, even though there is no announcement. In other words, his conscience will be accusing him of his wrong deed.

(c) Moral Teaching: Guilty conscience is a form of punishment for wrong doing which any normal wrong-doer cannot escape and so it is better to stop doing wrong and do good.

Klemeḏoa (Kelemeḏoa) metsia ñuifi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The person who has gone into a patch of giant-grass does not complain of skin irritation'.

(b) Explanation: This proverb comes from a farming experience and especially from farmers who work on the grassland. Sometimes they have to walk through the giant-grass to go to their farms and this produces a lot of skin irritation.

(c) Moral Teaching: The skin irritation caused by the giant-grass may be compared to minor distractions in the pursuance of one's objectives. The moral lesson of this proverb and of similar ones that will follow is that you must expect minor distractions in any effort that you put forth to realize certain objectives but do not let these minor distractions deter you from achieving your goals. You should not vacillate but be resolute and persistent in the pursuance of your goals.

Womeđoa tÇ tso gakÇa ko ðe dzi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'Once you make up your mind to cross a river by walking through, you do not complain of getting your stomach wet'.

(b) Moral Teaching: The moral lesson is as in the preceding proverb, and may be summed up in the biblical saying, once you put your hand to the plough you do not look behind. (a paraphrase)

FiafitÇ međuna wua agbleÇ o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A thief does not reap more than the farmer himself'.

(b) Explanation: Some people use the fact that thieves will steal their crops as an excuse for not farming at all. This proverb admits this fact but goes on to say that, however much thieves may take from your farm, you as the farmer will always harvest more crops than they can.

(c) Moral Teaching: The moral lesson of this proverb is like the two previous ones, but its emphasis is slightly different. In every enterprise some minor losses should be expected and they should not deter you from embarking upon it, because with persistence and dogged-determination some reasonable reward will be reaped in the end.

Ne yevu be yeana kuku wò la nakpÇ epe ta tÇ ða.

(a) Literal Translation: 'If a whiteman wants to give you a hat, look at the one he is wearing before you accept it'.

(b) Moral Teaching: This proverb is used to warn people against the tendency to be gullible and credulous. Always weigh carefully what others tell you and evaluate it by their social consequences.

Opete (Kaňgba, glu) mewÇna takoko matsi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The vulture cannot cure baldness, (because if it can it would have cured its own baldness.)

(b) Moral Teaching: In the traditional society some people lay claim to certain powers to cure diseases, to make others wealthy or to make barren women productive. The problem is, how do you test the validity of the claims that they make? This proverb establishes a standard for evaluating such claims. Whatever powers a person claims to have, such powers must be seen to make a practical difference to his own life before his claims could be accepted as valid, and so anybody who accepts such claims without this test of their validity will be considered gullible. The proverb is counselling against the tendency to be gullible in such matters and recommends critical assessment and discernment instead of gullibility.

Koklo be vÇvç enye agbe.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The chicken says, "Fear is life".'

(b) Moral Teaching: There is time to show bravery and time to show 'fear, i.e. cautious retreat.

Tsi dza to madze meli o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'There is no rain whose flood can submerge all mountains' i.e. there is an end to every fall of rain.

(b) Moral Teaching: There is an end to everything and people are supposed to use this knowledge to guide their behaviour or to comfort themselves in their sufferings.

Agbe didi megbÇa yÇdo ñu yina o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'Even the longest life ends in a grave, it does not prolong its longevity beyond the grave'.

(b) Moral Teaching: This proverb also teaches that there is an end to everything especially to wealth and life. This warning, however, is not supposed to lead to a preparation for another life, or for a life that has no end. The purpose is rather to warn people to live circumspectively and to avoid living without any thought of the end.

Proverbs in the Kuria Language: Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya in East Africa

Collected and explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha, Department of Foreign Languages and Linguistics, University of Dar Es Salaam and Research Committee, Maryknoll Language School, Musoma, Tanzania

Ono agoorwa nkwiwakaare.

* English: The one who is praised, comes forth to chant

* Meaning: A person who has been praised in public is challenged to chant (praise-poems)

Engonge yasekerreeye iyende igikuri.

* English: A baboon laughs at the buttocks of another baboon

* Meaning: Everyone has his/her weakness

Kena ngebo karainuguna.

* English: What has a dress, it boasts

* Meaning: People do not become proud of nothing, but because of specific things

Umwiheemi newe akuhirwa na amaanche.

* English: A boaster is one who drowns

* Meaning: Warning against being overly confident

Otoba umumura waanga gotoba obaaye mogaaka.

* English: It is better to be poor when one is young, rather than becoming poor at old age

* Meaning: Young people should work hard

From Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania.

Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with help of Max Tertrais, M. Afr. in conjunction with Sukama Research Committee, Mwanza, Tanzania. April 1999.

Kutimila mhofu kumala mali kuwashia kipofu kumaliza nyasi

* Literal Translation: To teach a heavy mind person is a lost of time of energy. Everything passes over his his head.

* Meaning: Don't loose your to share with somebody who has no intention of attention.

Mwongo gakulyaga mkumbuzi,kijito huuwa mwenye safari mkumbulwa ali sele

* Literal Translation: You go trouble because of a neighbor, but this man/woman keeps silent, although he was the cause of disturbance.

* Meaning: Many people are really irresponsible, they disturb you, but they go away when you need help.

Bwila ne mpona mtu mkarimu ni tajiri

* Literal Translation: What is the intention of your welcome? Isn't it in order to done the same when you are out of your home?

* Meaning: Rare are the rich people who are purely gracious, many times, they have a secret intention to be given back their gifts.

Nuwaho nsazi halyamvi shahidi inzi kwenye mavi

* Literal Translation: Eyewitness is better than the hearer of title-titles...

* Meaning: You attended a bad or joyful event, you can be a faithful witness more than somebody who heard of it.

From Collection of 100 Rundi (BURundi) Proverbs collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi, 2003.

Wanka bangwe ntiwanka zana ndabe

* Translation: You refuse to stop fighting but you cannot refuse to show the wounds/consequences.

* Meaning: Peaceful conflict resolution is better than war or fighting, which always has negative or destructive consequences.

Umanika agatu wicaye mu kukamanura ugahaguruka

* Translation: You can hang an item from where you are seated but when you want to get it down you have to stand up.

* Meaning: It is easier to start a conflict or war than to stop it.

Ikiza kitaguhitanye kiraguhitaniza

* Translation: when an epidemic does not kill you, it gives you some benefits.

* Meaning: Conflict, war or calamities have both negative and positive consequences.

Amanyama arasara ntasaba

* Translation: Stubbornness/stiffness leads to foolishness but not to servant hood.

* Meaning: Stubbornness does not lead to honor, but it rather leads to humiliation and shame.

Urya incuti ukinovora intuntu.

* Translation: When you eat your relatives, you lick agony.

* Meaning: Mistreating or killing your relative leads to your own moral and physical destruction.

**Ethiopian Wisdom Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People Oromo Language)
George Cotter, Pretoria University of South Africa 1996
John Mbiti, Series Editor**

Alagaa gaafa kolfaa / fira ofi gaafa rakko.

* The stranger is good for laughing, the relative for trouble.

* Explanation: In trouble go to a relative because he/she will help you. (Kinship, Help)

Alagaaf makaraa waakkatu / sanyif sanyirraa fuudhu.

* One refuses to give for the outsider from the bumper crop; one takes the seeds for the sowing for the relative.

* Explanation: Though one won't help an outsider, one will make any sacrifice for a relative. (Generosity, Kinship)

Angafa doofe / qotisuun karra dhaala.

* When the first born becomes foolish, the last born inherits the cattle.

* Explanation: If one is not keen and alert, one will be outdone by some-one else. (Carelessness)

Arifatanif haadhaf abbaa dura / hindhalatani.

* Because one is in a hurry he/she is not born before his/her mother and father.

* Explanation: No matter how impatient a person is he/she does not change the order of nature. (Haste, Nature)

Bakka dardarri lafa guutetti / dullumni na fudhate jedhe namichi.

* "At a time when girls fill the land old age caught up with me," said the old man.

* Explanation: Regretting what one can no longer do. (Regret, Limitation)

**A Collection of Umbundu Proverbs, Adages and Conundrums
from Angola by W.H. Sanders, American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions (1914).**

Note: In some cases the proverb is literally translated, but for others the English meaning rather than a literal translation has been provided. The original work does not differentiate. The Umbundu has not been proofread.

* A fele viso, mbanje omo vomena muleha.

Pretend trouble in eye to get a smell at his breath.

* Ambuaka kuate; ka va lingile ha vati, Ambua ka lie.

As dog its catch to the hunter, so the young fellow should bring his gettings to the sekulu.

* Ame cipange congulu si pikila omola; ka kaya.

I have instructed my children, brought them up well, and none of them need to be foolish or wicked.

* Ame elenaino oku vanda (tumba) utue. Si lingi ongombe yomala.

Though gentle like the chameleon I am not a children's ox, to be played with, made sport of, be trifled with.

* Ame olohaku hu onjekela; ko Ndombe si endi love.

Take or reject the advice as you please. You are the one that will be carried into servitude.

**From Collection of Sumbwa Proverbs Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of
Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania**

**Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with the help of Max Tertrais in conjunction with the
Sukuma Research Committee. Mwanza, Tanzania**

Watega zzyabwene umetega huku zimeona

* English: Keep your life in its secret and its protection. Otherwise, you will be astonished everybody will talk about it.

* Meaning: Secret has its exigences. Don't break it even with your wife!

Wapila mvula ali lume nalwe umpeona mvua na umande je? * English: Rain as well as dewdrops are coming from the same sky. You can be dry because of both of them.

* Meaning: You can be stuck in very small things, what about huge ones?

Wempeho atakulanganilwangwa hamilo mweny baridi haitiwi moto * English: You can be obsessed by certain problems in your life. Who can oblige you to work hardly that day?

* Meaning: For working well, you need a quiet mind.

Buhala bwe mbwa mahenbe mumavu, ustalabu wa mbwa lakini kulala kwenye majivu. * English: The dog can bark when people are passing, but look at him: his bed is as dirty as ashes.

* Meaning: Don't trust the appearances, the bragging man can be a very poor and stupid fellow.

Kwivuna bumasia mdali nagwe busirombo, kujivuna utakatifu, medali nayo iko ushirombo *

English: You are able to pray yourself in your own speeches, but really you are full of selfishness

* Meaning: When you introduce your person alone without witness, this introduction is doubtful.

Proverbs in the Ewe Language (Ghana)

6. Xe ɔo nu meɔoa tɔmelo o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A predacious bird can prey on some animals but not on a crocodile'.

Moral Teaching: (b) Moral Teaching: There are certain things any human being can do and others he cannot because his powers are limited, therefore you must know the limit of your powers and keep your a anslation: 'A dog can break bones but cannot break a piece of iron'.

7. Vi dzro nu medzroa golo ɔe azi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A beggar can beg for certain things but cannot beg for an ostrich's egg'. The egg of an ostrich is rare and therefore very difficult to get.

(b) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 6 above.

8. Ɖevi ka akple gã mekaa nya gã o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A child can swallow a big morsel of akple (i.e. cornmeal food) but cannot swallow big matters'.

(b) Explanation: A child can handle easy matters but cannot handle serious ones because his experience is limited; therefore he should limit himself to easier matters and should not presume that he can handle serious matters.

(c) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 6 above.

9. Ɖadi vi afi vi wòlena.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A kitten can catch only a baby mouse'.

(b) Moral Teaching: Always do what you can and have a realistic estimation of your abilities. Avoid overestimation of your powers.

10. Wometsɔa deku eve dea alɔgo ɔeka me o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'You cannot crack two palmnuts in the mouth at the same time'.

(b) Explanation: It is easier to crack one palmtree of a special oil-palm tree than to crack two with the teeth.

(c) Moral Teaching: Do not try to do too much at once. Learn to do one thing at a time.

Runci (Burundi) Proverbs
from The Endangered African Proverbs Collections
Compiled by Jean Dyandwi

Ugenda mu kibira utazi ugaca inkoni utazi

Translation: Going to a forest, you don't leads to getting/cutting a stick you don't know

Meaning: Doing things without wisdom leads to failure

Igumba itazi ikibi irigata ishenyo

Translation: An ignorant barren animal/woman licks an axe

Meaning: Ignorance leads to death or serious consequences

Uwutazi umuti awubishako

Translation: He who does not know a medicine he/she defecates on it

Meaning: Ignorance kills

Ico utazi ntikiwica

Translation: What you do not know cannot kill you

Meaning: People should be judged according to their intentions

Uwanka agakura abaga umutavu

Translation: He who hates growth kills a calf

Meaning: Some people neglect the development of the youth because they don't foresee their importance in the future (some other people do it purposely to avoid competition)

From Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs-Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya in East Africa (1999)

Collected and Explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha
Research Committee
Maryknoll Language School
Musoma, Tanzania

Egetoocho keihingiyi amatwi

English: The hare, it has accumulated ears

Meaning: All animals have ears, but the hare claims to be the owner of the biggest ears. Many people prefer to talk about their own achievements and disregard the achievements of others.

Application: It is not good to boast

Nokaaroga butiko noramanywe

English: Even if you bewitch in the night, you will be known

Meaning: It is not possible to hide everything you do

Application: This is told to a person who thinks people will not understand his mistake

Hano watara egetong'o wansoongo aibembeeria

English: When you mention the person with one eye, the one with the eye problem reacts

Meaning: When you have done something wrong, you are so conscious of it that you believe everyone else knows about it

Engoko eratoocha eraiyeya

English: The hen pecks and wipes its beak

Meaning: Many people are not ready to admit their mistakes. They deny having done anything wrong and clear away every proof.

Application: This is told to a person who is hiding his/her mistakes and pretends to be good.

Hano iring'ondi retaara guchimburumete kwibarre

English: When a sheep is in the company of goats of trees, it steals

Meaning: A sheep that is together with goats that eats trees also becomes mischievous. Be aware that bad company can mislead a good person.

Application: It is not good to be in the company of people who do evil.

Proverbs of the Nkundo-Mongo Tribes in Belgian Congo (Zaire)

Compiled by Wilma S. Jaggard Hobgood, Department of Africa, Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples of Christ

Nboloko afaikusa bionjo becw'a njoku.

Tasks or burdens to be borne:

An ANTELOPE wouldn't be strong enough to carry the tusks an elephant bears.

Ikokongo afactomba mbengo:--ikoka l'ifofole kika.

A small (person's) BACK can not carry (a heavy basket of) supplies (for camping);--it is only strong enough to carry a wee basket.

Ntacwaka ifele l'anko.

Suitable food to last during a long period in camp:

One does not set out for a hunting CAMP with bananas (only).

Tsa ifotekya loolo.

Great power is adequate for a hard task.

FIRE can soften iron.

Lituk'a weji ntambolaka mpifiji. (---ntonga.)

A beautiful, but dim light inadequate at times

The beauty of moonlight won't (enable one to) pick up CATERPILLARS.--(OR: --a needle.)

From Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs Collected and Explained by Jean Nyandwi

Nta wutera atengase

Translation: You cannot throw one thing while you are holding many other things

Meaning: Prioritization is important

Ubuho bwinshi ntibugira umusururu

Translation: Many millet grains do not make porridge

Meaning: Sometime quality is better than quantity

Amayira abiri yananiye imfyisi

Translation: It has been always difficult for a hyena to go through two ways (at the same time

Meaning: Opposite things cannot be done at the same time

Amabanga abiri ntabangikana

Translation: Two responsibilities cannot be held at the same time

Meaning: Two important tasks cannot be done at the same time

Impfizi y'intama intendera nka se

Translation: A he-sheep behaves like his father

Meaning: People imitate their elders or superiors

Proverbs in the Ewe Language (West Africa)

1. Avi metsoa agbleta wodzÇa dzi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'You do not rejoice when you see people arrive from the farm weeping'.

(b) Explanation: Whenever people arrive from the farm weeping it means that they have brought bad news which does not call for rejoicing.

(c) Moral Teaching: See proverb number 2 below for its moral teaching.

2. Ketiba medona wodoa dza ne o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'You do not welcome gladly a bundle made of mats', (because usually such bundles contain corpses and they bring bad news and their appearance is not an occasion for rejoicing or a warm welcome.)

(b) Moral Teaching: The moral lesson of the above two proverbs are the same. Avoid a precipitate action and adjust action to situations. Be sure you understand situations before you act in them. Avoid a senseless emotional reaction to events.

3. ðevi gba abobogo megbaa klogo o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The child who breaks a snail's shell cannot break a tortoise's shell'.

(b) Moral Teaching: There are certain things any human being can do and others he cannot because his powers are limited, therefore you must know the limit of your powers and keep your a anslation: 'A dog can break bones but cannot break a piece of iron'.

(b) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 3 above.ambitions within them. Do not be overambitious.

4. Avu lé nu meléa dzata o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A dog can catch some animals but cannot catch a lion'.

(b) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 3 above.

6. Xe þo nu meþoa tÇmelo o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A predacious bird can prey on some animals but not on a crocodile'.

Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 3 above.

**From Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs
Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania
Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with the help of Max Tertais**

Kasumu kalalya muhesi wako

English translation: You threw your spear on the skilled blacksmith who forged it.

Meaning: You wasted your wealth without reflection; today you become a beggar.

Rukwa lye mafuzi lukumalanga ne mafuzi gahe.

English translation: This man is used to breaking wings, he will die in this incorrect way.

Meaning: If someone cheats, they will be cheated in return.

Kwisagila sitambo sye nmemela sili hibega

English translation: You would like to eat the "nyemela" (animal meat) which you see on the hunter's shoulders, but it is not yours.

Meaning: Don't put your eyes on your neighbor's goods. You will be deceived or tempted to steal.

Busoga bwitetwe munda bubole.

English translation: A beautiful fruit, but inside it is rotten.

Meaning: Don't trust the appearance. This man can have a good introduction, but his heart and behavior are depraved.

Oti kumya nobe kalimwa mwino kalomo kutyelemzya.

English translation: Your fellow companion gets trouble, you express your amazement, but you escape to help him.

Meaning: You have a false compassion for your your neighbors; you don't like to relate to him and his problems, nor with him as a person. You miss your social duty.

Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs

Collected and Explained by Jean Nyandwi

October 2003

Endangered African Proverbs Collections

A Continuation of the African Proverbs Project

Proverb: Mu mahoro umuhoro urgamwa

English translation: Where there is peace a billhook (sickle) can be used to cut your hair or shave your beard.

Meaning: Peace is a very important asset on which every success depends

Proverb: Ubumwe bugira babiri

English translation: A union is made up of two people

Meaning: People need each other

Proverb: Ubugirigiri bugira babiri

English translation: An astute undertaking requires two persons

Meaning: Good planning, decision making or work requires the participation or involvement of more than one person

Proverb: Imisega ibiri ntinanirwa umugunza

English translation: Two skinny and weak dogs cannot fail to overcome a fierce animal

Meaning: There is power in union

Proverb: Ibuye riserutse nitryica isuka

English translation: A visible stone does not harm a hoe

Meaning: When you have been alerted to what you have to fear, you are able to be seriously careful or prudent

Kuria Proverbs (Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya in East Africa)

Collected and Explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha

Research Committee

Maryknoll Language School

P.O. Box 298

Musoma, Tanzania

Kuria: Otagacha kolaleka innyangi otige omonyalobeli

English: You should never forget your neighbor when you invite people to come to the feast

Meaning: The neighbor is the first person who comes to help you when there is a problem.

Therefore, you should always remember him/her.

Applications/Use: The proverb is used to insist on establishing good relationship with nay person who happens to be near you whether at home, in the office or when travelling.

Kuria: Te gutwi koogokina ghokera orosa hai.

English: The ear can not grow more than the chick. {cheek?}

Meaning: The mouth is the source of information, which feeds the ear.

Application/Use: The proverb is told to remind the young generation to be attentive to what is said by the elders.

Kuria: Tembeba ikuchuburia endi ilikanda.

English: The rat does not help the other rat to peel a piece of maize.

Meaning: It is not always easy for people with the same problem to help each other.

Application/Use: The proverb is used to encourage people to seek assistance from those who are better off.

Kuria: Umunywa ghoseriyi omogendi.

English: The mouth wronged the walker.

Meaning: The person who says words without care can end up breaking good relationship with those people he likes to visit.

Application/Use: The proverb is told to a person who likes gossiping or backbiting.

Kuria: Kegwita monto ngeke.

English: The thing that kills someone is small.

Meaning: One should not ignore small matters.

Application/Use: Small things could be a source of big problems.

Proverbs in the Kaonde Language compiled by John C. Ganly, M.M.

Bana bankazhi inge balonde maimba, bakaja buki.

Translation: If brothers follow the honey bird, they will eat honey.

Explanation: The accused cannot be a witness in his own case.

Kujimuka kwa kitengwe kana wamona bwishi.

Translation: The cleverness of the kitengwe (a bird which goes to a grass fire to catch insects) when it sees smoke.

Explanation: Everyone is clever when he is drinking. He knows it all.

Wafwisha mwaji, walala nayo. Translation: If the chief's wife dies, he lies down with it (hunger).

Explanation: A man is lenient when he is judging his own children (in comparison with others).

Kulu ko walemeneko, ko ukasunkuchila.

Translation: The lame leg will be used for limping.

Explanation: You will never forget a happy time, even though many years have passed (you are only able to limp with your leg now, but you remember when it was good).

Baja bantu bajila, pakuba baja nwena, baseka.

Those who eat people, cry; those who eat a crocodile, laugh.

Explanation: We rejoice when our enemies are killed, but we cry when our friends are killed.

Sesotho-The Voice of the People (Mokitimi)

Edited by John S. Mbiti

Ho robala ke ho fetoha.

Translation: To sleep is to change.

Explanation: It is human nature to have changing views.

Ho tsamaea ho naka li maripa.

Translation: To travel is like stunted horns.

Explanation: One meets many adventures in one's travels.

Ho tsamaea ke ho bona.

Translation: To travel is to see.

Explanation: Extensive travelling gives one more experience.

Tieho e tsoala tahleho.

Translation: Hesitation begets loss.

Explanation: There is danger or disappointment in delay.

Bofutsana bo jesa likatana.

Translation: Poverty makes one eat tattered clothes.

Explanation: A poor person has little choice.

Lesotho/South Africa

Mpa-tsehla ha e bolae.

Translation: A full belly does not kill.

Explanation: Food without clothing is better than clothing without food.

Ho fahla 'muso ka lehlabathe.

Translation: To put sand into the eyes of the government.

Explanation: He/she has committed a criminal offence.

Mo-ja-pele o ts'oana le mo-ja-morao.

Translation: The first eater is like the latter eater.

Explanation: Waiting time is the time that pays best.

'Mele oa motho e mong ke chaba se hole.

Translation: Somebody else's body is a far-away nation.

Explanation: What is experienced by one cannot be experienced by others.

Ngoan'a lelala o antse khonong.

Translation: A child of a blacksmith has suckled well.

Explanation: A person has taken after his/her industrious parent

Kuria Proverbs-Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya in East Africa: Collected and Explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha

Amanche tegagutira inguku

English translation: Water never flows up the mountain

Meaning: Problems happen where there is a weakness

Application/Use: The proverb is used to teach that our weakness is the source of most problems.

Amogooro tegana amaiso

English translation: Feet have no eyes

Meaning: Feet can not stop one from going into danger

Application/Use: A person's conscience is responsible for the decisions he makes.

Amang'o gaitere umuchora amang'o

English translation: The abundance of fruit caused the death of fruit lover

Meaning: When we find ourselves in the middle of what we like most, we forget the danger that could happen to our lives

Application/Use: When we find ourselves in the middle of what we like most, we forget the danger that could happen to our lives.

Egete keno keraagutuir niga ogilchabela

English translation: When you see that a stick is pointing to your eye, move away from it

Meaning: You have to run away from any kind of evil for your safety

Application/Use: It is not possible to face all problems. Sometimes we have to run away before confronting them.

Engoge yasekerei eende

English translation: Chimpanzee laughed at each other's tail

Meaning: It is easy for one to look for and criticize others mistakes forgetting his/her own mistakes

Application/Use: The proverb is told to a person who likes to criticize.

From Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs: Geita/Kahama Districts, Tanzania

Kwivuna bumasia mdali nagwe busirombo

Translation: You are able to pray yourself in you won speeches, but really you are full of selfishness witness, this introduction is doubtful.

Buhala bwe mbwa mahenbe mumvuu

Translation: The dog can bark when people are passing, but look at him: his bed is as dirty as ashes.

Meaning: Don't trust appearances, the bragging man can be a very poor and stupid fellow.

Wempeho atakulanganilwanga hamilo

Translation: You can be obsessed by certain problems in your life, who can oblige you to work hardly that day?

Meaning: For working well, you need a quiet mind.

Wapila mvula lume nalwe

Translation: Rain as well as dewdrops are coming from the same sky. You can be dry because of both of them.

Meaning: You can be stuck in very small things, what about the huge ones?

Meaning: When you introduce your person alone without

From Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs Collect and Explained by Jean Nyandwi

Ubumwe buramota

Translation: Cohesion embalms

Meaning: Concord has beneficial effects

Aho ishari ritari agashato ka Rukwavu gakwira bane

Translation: Where there is no jealousy, a small hare's leather is enough to cover four people

Meaning: Where there is no jealousy, people are able to share the little they have

Aho Uburundi butunze urutoke hunakwa inzu

Translation: Wherever Burundi points a finger, a house is built

Meaning: In harmony, everything succeeds

Isinzi ntibesha

Translation: The crowd does not lie

Meaning: What the majority agrees on in one accord is trustworthy and acceptable

Rea rera ho phetha Molimo.

We plan, God acts.

Expl: Man proposes, God disposes.

Liketso tsa Molimo ekare liloitho.

Acts of God are like riddles.

Expl: Nobody knows what will happen in the near future. Sometimes unexpected things happen.

Khomo Molimo o nko e metsi.

The cow: God with a wet nose.

Expl: The importance of a cow to a Mosotho is seen to be like the importance of God to the people, because God gives people life. For their livelihood, the Basotho depend on the many uses of cattle.

Molomo oa mofu ha o tloloe.

The mouth of the dead is respected.

Expl: What has been said by a person before his death is followed to the letter.

Ho rokoa ea shoeleng.

The dead is praised.

Expl: Nothing bad is said of a dead person.

Pha-balimo o ja le bona.

A person who gives to the ancestors, eats with them.

Expl: Hospitality is a virtue.

Kiswahili Proverbs

Wawili kwenye kupalilia magugu, kumi kwenye mfuko.

Two are working but ten wait for the profit.

'Wote watawala', huleta mafarakano.

'All are rulers/leaders', causes riots.

Yai haliatamii kuku.

An egg never sits (as a hen does when she has eggs) on a hen (i.e. a child is not greater than its parents).

Yaotayo kwanza (meno) siyo yatumiwayo kula.

Those which come first (teeth) are not those which are used for eating.

Zimeanguka (senene au panzi) wasipozila.

They have fallen (grasshoppers) where people never eat them.

Alomte efon miau bo.

The cat does not cease to cry " miau."

Ka foo loflo.

A crab does not beget a bird.

Silafo etsoo filafu gbe.

A blind man does not show the way to a blind man.

Kole nya nson.

The Kole (River) flows into the sea.

N.B.-This is quoted as we say, "Walls (or winds) have ears," warning people not to speak out their secrets.

Nme kome fiteo nmei fe.

One (bad) nut spoils all.

From Rev. Dr N. K. Dzobo of Cape Coast University

Avi metsoa agbleta wodzÇa dzi o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'You do not rejoice when you see people arrive from the farm weeping'.

(b) Explanation: Whenever people arrive from the farm weeping it means that they have brought bad news which does not call for rejoicing.

(c) Moral Teaching: See proverb number 2 below for its moral teaching.

Ketiba medona wodoa dza ne o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'You do not welcome gladly a bundle made of mats', (because usually such bundles contain corpses and they bring bad news and their appearance is not an occasion for rejoicing or a warm welcome.)

(b) Moral Teaching: The moral lesson of the above two proverbs are the same. Avoid a precipitate action and adjust action to situations. Be sure you understand situations before you act in them. Avoid a senseless emotional reaction to events.

Đevi gba abobogo megbaa klogo o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'The child who breaks a snail's shell cannot break a tortoise's shell'.

(b) Moral Teaching: There are certain things any human being can do and others he cannot because his powers are limited, therefore you must know the limit of your powers and keep your ambitions within them. Do not be overambitious.

Avu lé nu meléa dzata o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A dog can catch some animals but cannot catch a lion'.

(b) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 3 above.

Avu ðu þu međua ga o.

(a) Literal Translation: 'A dog can break bones but cannot break a piece of iron'.

(b) Moral Teaching: As in proverb number 3 above.

Nsamanfo po pe won dodow, na menne ateasefo?

Even the dead want an increase in their number, how much more the living?

Expl: Having more and more people is a desire of the Akan and few libation prayers leave out a request for the bearers of children to bear more children. This need for more members, according to this proverb, is not restricted to the living.

Oteasefo na oma osaman kon do oto.

It is the living person who makes the inhabitant of the spirit world long for the mashed yam.

Expl: The Akan have a ritual food, oto, made up of mashed yam (plain or mixed with palm oil) and hard boiled eggs. The eggs symbolize life, and the ritual food may be given to a person's guardian spirit on special occasions, when the need arises, to feed it, or wash it, as the Akan say. Oto is also sprinkled at shrines and their surrounding areas as well as at other sacred places during festivals and other ritualistic occasions.

Osaman ntwen oteasefo ansa na wadidi.

A departed spirit does not wait for the living before it eats. That is, a departed spirit does not depend on the living for its sustenance.

Expl: The Akan belief is that their departed relatives are spirits and that they have unlimited mobility and unhindered access. Therefore, as spirits, the departed can have access to meals even before their living relatives begin to eat. The proverb shows the power of the departed spirits as well as the basis of the continued relationship between them and the living.

Wunni osaman aduan a, womfa wo nsa nto mu.

If you are not going to partake of the food of the departed spirit, you do not put your hand into it.

Expl: Although the Akan express fellowship with their departed spirits, they nevertheless keep a respectful distance between themselves and their departed ancestors. The reason for this attitude is the fear that the dead might take the living away with them since they are always seeking to increase their number by taking people from among the living to join their ranks. The living therefore try to avoid direct physical contact with them. Food intended for the spirits is, therefore, either put into a separate dish, put on the ground or even scattered.

Osaman tee ne nsa kyia wo a, wopono wo de mu.

When an apparition (ghost) stretches its hand to greet you, you pull yours back.

Expl: Although shaking hands with each other and with strangers is stressed in the Akan tradition, this mark of brotherhood and sisterhood is not extended to the departed spirits because of the fear they may take one away. In its wider connotation, the proverb implies that one should avoid coming into contact with what will bring about harmful or undesirable consequences

Osaman bubu ba a, na eye hu; obeto wo a, wo nua ne no.

When a ghost is approaching at a distance, it is fearful; but when it gets closer (you discover that) it is a relative.

Expl: The avoidance of direct physical contact with ghosts as a result of the fear of the consequences of such contact is a common Akan behaviour. An approaching ghost is therefore a frightening phenomenon but when the ghost gets closer, one finds that it is a relative. In a general sense, the proverb suggests that things may be fearful at a distance but when they get closer, they no longer appear to be so.

This week's proverbs are selections from African Proverbs on Peace and War, collected and compiled by Annetta Miller.

“It is not possible to dodge the arrow before it has been thrown.”
Maasai

“As long as fire stays in one's breast, it does not cool down.”
Ethiopia

“What you recognize as deadly will not kill you.”
Uganda

“A man with too much ambition cannot sleep in peace.”
African

“He that forgives gains the victory.”
Nigeria

This week's proverbs are selections from Dagbani Proverbs #2 by Pageault et al.

To the fool don't say: “Your father is sick”; say: “Your father is dead.”
(A fool must be frightened into action.)

If your horse can race well, you don't use it to run after birds.
(Don't be presumptuous or imprudent in the use of your strengths, wealth, your people, or workers.
Don't be too exacting.)

If you didn't send someone to the market, you won't expect his return.
(To express surprise at something unexpected. Or: Why worry?)

Those who go to examine the rainwater puddle will meet scorpions (around it).
(You'll get into trouble if you're too inquisitive.)

The poor man laid an egg and the rich man hatched it.
(The rich exploit the poor.)

These proverbs are selections from “Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs” collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi, from the series “Endangered African Proverbs Collections, A Continuation of the African Proverbs Project.” The series is written up on the African Proverbs website, at <http://www.afriprov.org>. Additions are made frequently to the website, so be sure to visit regularly.

Inda y'uwundi irakoma induru nti wumva.
You can't hear somebody else's belly screaming.

Ukura utabaza ugasaza utamenye.

When you don't ask questions while growing up, you become old while still ignorant.

Ukuri guca mu ziko ntigusha.

The truth passes through fire and does not burn.

Aho ishari ritari agashato ka Rukwavu gakwira bane.

Where there is no jealousy a small hare's leather is enough to cover four people.

Ivya gusa bitera ubwenge buke.

Free things decrease one's intelligence.

These proverbs are selections from Dagbani Proverbs #2 by Pageault et al al.

"I always go in the water" is the one the crocodile catches.

If the foot doesn't go (to the place of the quarrel), the mouth won't interfere.

A blind man already has his foot on the stone he threatens to throw at you.

Sending (someone to get something for you) gives rest to your feet, not your heart.

Dig out a noxious thing; don't turn it around in its hole.

**These proverbs are selections from Dagbani Proverbs #2
by Pageault et al.**

However nice the elbow may be, it cannot remove dirt from the eye.

A human being wants speed, but speed depends on God.

The quiver of God's servant broke under the rope tree. [right where he could get the fiber to fix it]

A cheap horse won't climb a hill.

An old man sitting on the ground sees something a child can't see even if he climbs a tree.

**These proverbs are selections from "African Proverbs on Peace and War"
collected and compiled by Annetta Miller.**

"If you can't resolve your problems in peace, you can't solve war."

- Somalia

“The chaser and the one who is chased get tired.”

- Kikuyu, Kenya

“The weak warrior wearing sandals overcomes the brave with a thorn in his foot.”

- Uganda

“A fight between grasshoppers is a joy to the crow.”

- Lesotho

“If the stone falls on the pot, woe to the pot; if the pot falls on the stone, woe to the pot.”

- Ghana

This week’s proverbs are selections from “Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia” by Negussay Ayele.

Two things that are hard to notice: an elephant losing weight and a wealthy person becoming a pauper.

Wisdom is attained at sixty; money is accumulated at thirty – if only the process could be reversed!

If you are not sure of what is yonder throw a pebble toward it and see what happens.

Flailing after falling only results in more bruising.

When they gossip about someone listen as if it were about you.

This weeks proverbs are selctions from "Proverbs of Africa, Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition" - an exposition and analysis of 2,600 proverbs from 64 peoples by Ryszard Pachocinski.

Bitir mizsham o'nya gida.

Thatch water can fill the water pot.

(Steadiness and patience can result in great success.)

Ngon jin zjhan del ishe ah, abaka nhgari.

When a drum begins to sound melodiously, it is near to bursting.

(When you begin to blow your own trumpet, it is usually an indication that you are heading for some disaster.)

Wuniya tha gotha kandza'u.

You leave your cow and you run after a snake for meat.

(Trying to get something better than what you already have, you may result in losing the very thing you had before.)

Ashi wo shi me lishi lishi wo za he lishi lifung.

What you do in black hair you will eat in white hair.

(The outcome of your life is best seen when you are old.)

Mmini zo afu na ukwu ogazi di ise.
When it rains we see that a guinea fowl has five toes.
(The exact character of a person is revealed when something happens.)

This weeks proverbs are selected from “Collection of 100 Rundi (Burundi) Proverbs” collected and explained by Jean Nyandwi, from the series “Endangered African Proverbs Collections, A Continuation of the African Proverbs Project.” The series is written up on the African Proverbs website, at www.afriprov.org. Additions are made frequently to the website, so be sure to visit regularly.

N’iritagira inkoko riraca.
A night without roosters will still end.
(Hope does not necessarily have to be based on tangible signs.)

Akanyoni katagurutse ntikamenya iyo bweze.
A bird cannot know where the sorghum is ready (to eat) unless it flies.
(A lazy person is not aware of opportunities.)

Ingona iva mu ruzi ikarigata urume.
A crocodile comes out of the river to lick the dew.
(Other people’s possessions appear to be more important or better than what one has.)

Uwutazi umuti awubishako.
He who does not know a medicine, he/she defecates on it.
(Ignorance kills.)

Bene vyo nibo bene inambu.
The haves are the have-nots.
(Some rich people want to get more and more possessions even when it means being unfair to the poor.)

This week's proverbs are selected from “Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs, from the Geita/ Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in Western Tanzania.” Collected by Joseph Nkumbulwa with the help of Max Tertrais, M. Afr. in conjunction with Sukuma Research Committee. This booklet is from the series "Endangered African Proverbs Collection: A Continuation of the African Proverbs Project."

Kwiluzya nakani ne seko.
To pursue a rabbit and to laugh together, you will miss him.
(When you begin a serious work, don’t chat with anybody in the same time, you could not pay the needed attention. Avoid distraction.)

Ndavitogwa ndebitolwe.
If I have decided to love somebody, I oblige myself to be patient with him/her.
(Love is patience. To love includes long-suffering also.)

Ngoyo yakanga bwobo.

Hen is fighting with a mushroom which has no aggressivity!

(You lose your time in a false cause. Don't break your nails uselessly on things which are irreducible.)

Mkulu kumuleka numbiko mumulomo.

You can run quicker than an old man, but for his wiseness and his words you are behind.

(A man is a man, but the difference between a young one and an old one is wide.)

Kalomo kasoga kalalazya n fisi hizyalala.

Everybody, even he who has a bad character, can be softened by kind conversation. He will make a step that day.

(Try to be kind with everybody; you will harvest friends, even hard people.)

This week's proverbs are selected from "Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs, Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya in East Africa" collected and explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha.

Mkaa ndio hugeuka kuwa jivu.

Burning charcoal is turned into ashes.

(Every burning conflict eventually settles down and is forgotten.)

Sisimizi hawaumani.

A black ant will not bite another (black ant).

(People belonging to the same group should not fight each other.)

Unapoanika unakausha.

When you spread it in the sun, it becomes dry.

(Whenever you hide your problems, nobody can help you.)

Mbeleko moja haibebi watoto wawili.

One piece of cloth cannot carry two children.

(You have to do one thing at a time.)

Apendaye asali humwa na nyuki.

Bees sting him who loves honey.

(Great achievement is attained through painful experiences.)

This weeks proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" by Negussay Ayele

The haughty blind person picks a fight with his guide.

To his hosts the incoming stranger first appeared like gold, then turned to silver and eventually ended up as crude iron.

Some people appear satiated and content in public even if they may go to bed hungry at home.

When taken for granted, gold in one's hand is sometimes considered like cheap copper – so are people.

You may begin to like people without trusting them and when you get to trust them, it becomes redundant to ask if you like them.

This week's proverbs are selected from "Swahili Proverbs" by Albert Scheven.

Ndovu wawili wakisongana ziumiazo ni nyika.
When two elephants jostle, that which is hurt is the grass.

Vita vya panzi (ni) furaha ya kunguru.
War among grasshoppers delights the crow. (Used when people benefit from the misfortunes of others.)

Achanikaye kwenye mpini hafi njaa.
He who gets blisters from the hoe-handle will not die of hunger.

Mtoto ni kito, mzigu mzito.
A child is like a precious stone, [but also] a heavy burden.

Mkosefu wa mali si maskini.
Lacking money is not [necessarily the same as] being poor.

This week's proverbs are all selected from "Swahili Proverbs" by Jan Knappert.

Shauku kathiri huondoa ubasiri.
Surfeit of passion bereaves of wisdom.

Penye kuku wengi simwage mahindi.
Where there are many chickens do not spill maize. (Discretion.)

Ngalawa na iwe juu wimbi chini.
May the boat be on top, the wave below. (Bon voyage.)

Mwenye moyo wa furaha humzaidia raha.
The owner of a cheerful heart will find his joy ever increasing.

Msema kweli hana wajoli.
The speaker of truth has no friends.

This week's proverbs are all selected from Ryszard Pachocinski, Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition. The language is given after each one.

Laa mang goetok goeman muan wu soeng.

A child who is carried on the back will not know how far the journey is. (Spoon-feeding does not help the child to be independent and capable of doing things on his or her own.)

Njak

Daga funfuru nyi wun ga e ka yika o.

It is only when fish is fresh that you can bend it. (You can inculcate good habits in individuals only when they are young.)

Nupe

Gbogbo alangba ro dina de le, a e mo ghin na i dun.

All lizards lie on their bellies, but nobody knows which of them suffers stomach ache. (Used when some carry their problems boldly written on their foreheads to remind them that their situation is not unique and that it is a question of attitude which prevents people from showing their inner life outwardly.)

Yoruba

A ki wo ago alago sise.

We do not look at another person's clock in order to work. (Said to those who imitate other people's life style.)

Yoruba

Shimfidar fuska ta fi ta tabarma.

Spreading of the face is better than the spreading of the mat. (Cheerfulness is better welcome than an offer of seat. When a person is warmly welcomed though not well entertained.)

Hausa

This week's proverbs are all selected from Ryszard Pachocinski, Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition. The language is given after each one.

Agwo nabu ana na-cju ukpa.

A snake which escapes fills a basket. (The snake which escapes is always described as big enough to fill a basket. Use to accuse someone of exaggerating what cannot be verified.)

Igbo

Ichaka mi che egwa.

My trousers are ten. (I have ten pairs of trousers but I can only put on one at a time. It is not good to have too many pieces of clothes that you cannot take care of.)

Igala

Akwa ohuru na-akpa mamiri.

A new cloth induces urine. (If people have new clothes, they will seek any occasion for showing them off by getting up and going out of church to urinate and coming back again.)

Igbo

Iyuhe ka mtwen.

Jealousy is like ash. (Jealousy is like ashes that are poured on the wind which could blow back onto you.)

Tiv

Orihi ana zu ete osi o hu.

The ground has drunk the rain that was fallen down. (Let us forgive.)

Ebira

This week's proverbs are all selected from Ryszard Pachocinski, Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition. The language is given after each one.

"Iyawo iyi a fi ijo fe iran nie wo lo."

A wife that we see and marry at the party will always like to be going to the party and later ask for a divorce. (Love at first sight never lasts.)

Igbomina

"Or yer iyol i nan er inundugh ga."

Nobody refers to part of his body as a hump.

(Said to mean that however useless or hopeless your relative is you do not disown him/her.)

Tiv

"Nin lom leu ga je ku te so."

When teeth bite the tongue, it is not the case of hatred.

(Said when two related persons mistakenly clash or one hits the other.)

Chamba

"Akinaabo lo apu wiye olo oko te eche."

The tortoise adorned itself with hard shells but its neck is bare so that relatives might touch him.

(No matter how successful and self-sufficient, one still needs love and kindness from others.)

Idoma

"Bua maren sha ashe a ior ga."

A cow does not deliver in the presence of people.

(Used to advise people, for example husband and wife, that a quarrel need not be settled when people are around but privately.)

Tiv

This week's proverbs are all selected from Ryszard Pachocinski, Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition. The language is given after each one.

Kada Allah ya kawo ranar yabo.

May God not bring the praising day.

(Worth of a person is not known or discovered until after he is dead or transferred. A person may be praised when his successor is not doing well.)

Hausa

Uno ana ra zi yionu, Osiomoshi ono pe dusi.
God keeps away flies from the tailless cow.
(The helpless rely on God.)
Igarra

Ikon Allah kare a bakin zomo.
In God's will the dog will be in the hare's mouth.
(To underline God's omnipotence.)
Hausa

Olorun ki i fi nkan se ni ki o ma fi aye ope sile.
God does not allow anyone to suffer without leaving a gap for thankfulness.
(To console someone in time of adversity.)
Igbomina

Gani ga wani ya isa tsoron Allah.
Everyone's experience is enough to fear God.
Hausa

This week's proverbs are selected from Annetta Miller, *Sharing Boundaries: Learning the Wisdom of Africa* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2003). Proverbs are not given in the original languages in this book, and in many cases the language of origin is not identified. Each proverb is amplified by a short poem in blank verse based on a personal experience of the author.

Praise and truth are revealed slowly (Ethiopia).

To give to your friend is not to cast away; it is to store for the future (Swahili).

We dance, therefore we are (unknown).

If birds travel without coordination, they beat each others wings (Swahili).

There is always room for the people you love, even if the house is crowded (Tanzania).

This week's proverbs are selected from W. H. Sanders, *A Collection of Umbundu Proverbs, Adages and Conundrums*, included on the African Proverbs CD. Umbundu is a major language in Angola.

Ca pata usitue, ocilala ci sule.
Relatives are a better defense than a fortress.

Ci linga usumba osanji yi ci.
A fowl shuns the poisonous worm.

Cimenemene nji ka tiava. Omene hati, Si ka tiava vali. Kalunga wa tiava kuale.
In cold daybreak he wills to get firewood. After sunrise he changes his mind saying, "Sending forth the sun, Kalunga has supplied the fuel."

Epuku liocili te eli lioku pukula Suku.
God's displeasure is the serious thing; that of others can be endured.

Etumba we lilonga halio liu ku lia.
He is frying in his own fat [his own bad habits].

This week's proverbs are all selected from Isabella Mokitimi, The Voice of the People: Proverbs of the Basotho. They come from the Sesotho language spoken in Lesotho and South Africa.

Do not open the mouth of a snake to see its teeth.

The horse has four legs but still falls sometimes.

The beast of burden will die but its harness remains [a person may die but someone still has to do his/her work].

The last quail to fly is the one struck by the hunting sticks.

A person who roasts a locust does not blink [lest it burn and become inedible].

This week's proverbs are all selected from Ryszard Pachocinski, Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition. The language is given after each one.

When the soup sours, the orphan gets an unusually large amount (Igbo).

What an elder can see while sitting, a child cannot see while standing (Kambari).

Having little knowledge is like having your hands tied around your neck [like a slave] (Hausa).

Look for a black goat while it is still daytime (Igbo).

One's character is just like any writing on a stone [it is obvious] (Jaba).

This week's proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" Compiled and Presented with Introduction, Annotations by Negussay Ayele.

Being a burglar with a cough and supplicating to God with a grudge in the heart are not productive.

Genuine love and friendship is like hot charcoal that is covered by ashes; when you return back to it much later and poke it a little it is rekindled and reactivated anew.

Wealth usually comes in walking but exits running.

When your eyes are poked your grip on someone's throat loosens.

One's name remains above the grave.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" Compiled and Presented with Introduction, Annotations by Negussay Ayele.

Kindness with words is as readily available as goods in the market.

It is foolhardy to climb two trees at once just because one has two feet.

To fight with everyone can result in shortage of pallbearers at your funeral.

Vast differences among people are in the realm of character, not anatomy.

Work very hard at what you do; dine as well as you can afterwards.

This week's proverbs are selections from original field research by Lucas Bambo on behalf of the African Proverbs Project and have never been published in print. The entire Northern Sotho Proverbs collection is available on The African Proverbs CD.

Bophelo ke molaetsa. Thee letsa.

Life is a message. Listen to it.

Bophelo ke kalafo. Ea mogele.

Life is a treatment. Accept it.

Bophelo ke mathomo. Bo thome.

Life is a foundation. Start it.

Bophelo ke thuto. Tswelelela.

Life is education. Carry on.

Bophelo ke tumelo. Tshepa.

Life is a belief. Trust it.

Bophelo ke lerato. Nagana ka lona.

Life is love. Think about it.

Bophelo ke mpho. E a mogele.

Life is a gift. Accept it.

Bophelo ke mosomo. O sumise.

Life is a work. Use it.

Bophelo bo bo hlokwa. Hlokomela.

Life is an adventure. Dare it.

This week's proverbs are selections from original field research by Lucas Bambo on behalf of the African Proverbs Project and have never been published in print. The entire Northern Sotho Proverbs collection is available on The African Proverbs CD.

Ngwana a ka feta gare ga molete wa tau.

A child can pass through a lion's hole.

Expl: Even if you are old, listen to the children. Maybe the clue will be there.

Ditoro dika no bolelwa, fela dika sebontshe.

Dreams can be told but not acted. It is sometimes easy to say a thing, while you can't do it.

Monna o swanetse go dula a thabile gore a kgone go soma ga botse.

Man must always be happy in order to perform well.

Le ge e kaba mang le mang o ka sehlogele kgomo ya gago e subelela ka lerageng.

No matter whom you are you will never let your cow sink into the mud.

Expl: No time to rest. Everyone must look after his children.

Modumo wa ngwana o monnyane o kwagala gabotse ko legodimong. The sound of a small baby can be heard easily in heaven.

Mwela ke bamukwata na maboko ne.

Wind is never caught by hand.

Explanation: You can never recall your words, once they are out.

Bufumu bwa bowa mukoto.

The kingdom of the mushroom is the stem.

Explanation: A chief is important because of his people.

Kuja kwa lubilo kulengela kwishipawila.

To eat with speed causes one to spit out continuously.

Explanation: It is not good to criticize a person until you know all of the facts.

Lufu Iwapichile kale nangwa bakubuIe lelo ke lube bulanda ne.

The death which passed already, even if they tell it to you today, it doesn't cause sorrow.

Explanation: When you mourn someone's death, you are really mourning your own (future death).

Kyaje wa nzolo inge wokokola mwipayai.

If a hen crows, kill it.

Explanation: Avoid proud women.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" Compiled and Presented with Introduction, Annotations by Negussay Ayele.

He who eats alone dies alone – without mourners.

Your close friend can be your worst enemy and vice versa.

What do eyes and friendship have in common? Minor incidents can damage both.

A mother's womb is technicolor; it gives birth to any kind and character of children.

One does not forego sleeping because of the possibility of nightmares.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Kaonde Proverbs" by Fr. John C. Ganly, M.M., as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Kuzhima kwa mukovu kana tu ne kacheche kantu. To take away a scar, you can't, except with a little thing.

Explanation: If you have offended someone, you must pay them something, no matter how small, in order to be reconciled.

Mpuku inge watwela mu bwina bwa mfuko kuvulañanyako.

If a mouse enters into the hole of a mole, forget about it.

Explanation: You don't expect to win a case in someone else's village.

Muzhi ye batwa bufuku kikoo.

A village in which grain pounding is done at night is a strong whistle.

Explanation: If people prepare their food at night (because they don't want to share it) it means they have a famine.

Lonzhi wa kukokela mukoyo uchibika.

A rope which is pulled for a long time, breaks.

Explanation: If you continue to provoke someone, you are sure to make him erupt in anger.

Mukola kuzhika mambo a nsulo.

A river is deep because of the source.

Explanation: One should respect parents and elders because they are the source of our life.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" Compiled and Presented with Introduction, Annotations by Negussay Ayele.

Better a single decision maker than a thousand advisors.

Half of one's strength in conflict situations is one's verbal skills.

A tune is made meaningful by lyrics; a point is elucidated by analogies and idioms.

As the chimp gets higher and higher climbing the tree it exposes its unflattering behind.

The horse can take you to the battlefield but cannot do the fighting for you.

Kwenda kwa kolokofwa ne nzubo yanji.
The journey of a snail and its house.
Explanation: Wherever a wise man goes, he goes with his wisdom.

Kukwata mulwanyu ku mubenza.
To catch an enemy is to stalk him.
Explanation: You must be patient to solve a case or a problem.

Muvumbo wa kañonyi ye witubula kajo ko aja.
The beak of the bird is what tells us the things it eats.
Explanation: Your words reveal the kind of person you are.

Inge wakeba kwipaya ñwena bukiji wajizha jike janji.
If you wish to kill a crocodile, quickly rap on its egg.
Explanation: If you wish to see how someone will react to you in a fight, strike his children.

Muzhi wa mpazhi ke batungilapo ne.
They do not build in the red ant's village.
Explanation: People like to live in a peaceful village, not a troublesome one.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Wit and Wisdom of Ethiopia" Compiled and Presented with Introduction, Annotations by Negussay Ayele.

An aging man gets closer to his land and an aging husband closer to his wife.

It is not becoming to uncover one's behind to cover the face.

Because he hardly closes his mouth the fool's teeth suffer from frost.

Kinship is like the scales; it keeps one on balance.

The coin of love has two sides: to love as one knows how or wishes to love and even better, to love as one's lover wishes to be loved.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Kaonde Proverbs" by Fr. John C. Ganly, M.M., as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Kutobala kwa buki muntu wafwijile mu lupako.
The sweetness of the honey; a person dies in a hole in the tree.
Explanation: Don't stay where you aren't wanted.

Kunanga kwa kumakya kusambakana banyama.
To hunt in the morning is to meet animals.
Explanation: If you wish to complete your work you must begin early.

Muvumbo wa kañonyi ye witubula kajo ko aja.
The beak of the bird is what tells us the things it eats.
Explanation: Your words reveal the kind of person you are.

Nyama ya nzolo kutama kumulubankanya kuteka.
The meat of a chicken is bad only when it is cooked badly.
Explanation: Every thing is good when it is used properly.

Wabelamina mu bwina bwa muma.
You have lain in wait in an old hole (where the mice or moles no longer live).
Explanation: Why waste your time talking to an unreasonable person

This week's proverbs are selections from "Kaonde Proverbs" by Fr. John C. Ganly, M.M., as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Kiswa inge kyafika ne ku nzubo mujilo pa kumuzhima kyakatazha bingi. The tall grass if it reaches over your house, it is very hard to quench the fire.
Explanation: Prevention is better than cure.

Boya bwa kibambale bubabana tu bonse.
The hair of a hairy caterpillar, all of it causes itching.
Explanation: One wrong-doing in a village involves everyone.

Kwenda kwa kolokofwa ne nzubo yanji.
The journey of a snail and its house.
Explanation: Wherever a wise man goes, he goes with his wisdom.

Banyike kukutemwa paji to wibapa.
The children, to like you, there are some things which you give to them.
Explanation: You can tell if a house is good if a lot of children are playing around it.

Kukwata mulwanyu ku mubenza.
To catch an enemy is to stalk him.
Explanation: You must be patient to solve a case or a problem.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Kaonde Proverbs" by Fr. John C. Ganly, M.M., as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Ngulube kyenda minyinya, paji ne kyamuvundumuna.
When a wild pig walks in the daytime, something has caused it to leave its hiding place.
Explanation: Said, when a person who ordinarily never comes to visit or help you suddenly appears at your house. It means that "the only reason this man could be coming is to ask for help or a favor."

Muchima wa mukwenu munkundwe.
Another person's heart is a wilderness.
Explanation: You can never know what the other person is really thinking or feeling.

Kipungulu wapakalala ka, ami napakalala byambo. Owl, why are you so quiet? I am quiet because of words.
Explanation: When one is quiet, it is usually because something is on his mind.

Bichi bikala pamo, byo bishenkana.

Adjacent trees, it is those whose branches rub against each other.

Explanation: Two people who are together frequently, inevitably quarrel.

Ñoma yalunga yo isabika.

The drum that beats well is the one that breaks.

Explanation: Leaders do not live long because people kill them out of jealousy.

This week's proverbs are selections from "Kaonde Proverbs" by Fr. John C. Ganly, M.M., as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Pekala bakulu, kechi pechika muto ne.

Where there are old people, the soup will not be poured out (thrown away).

Explanation: The old people have the wisdom to solve problems.

Bikondama kuya nshiku bikoloka.

All bent things, as days go by, will be straightened.

Explanation: Time heals all wounds.

Misongo ya ngandu iyuka kyovwe mobendela.

The pains of the crocodile are known only to the hippopotamus with whom he travels.

Explanation: Be careful of interfering with another person's business.

Meno bikupa.

Teeth are merely bones.

Explanation: Just because a person is smiling doesn't mean that they don't have troubles.

Pafwa bichi pashipa mabula.

Dying trees spit out leaves.

Explanation: No leader is irreplaceable, i.e., you can always find a successor.

This week's proverbs are selected from "Luganda Proverbs" by Ferdinand Walser as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Agenda ewaabwe: tazibirirwa budde.

One who goes back to his home: does not consider the night too dark. He knows his way.

Akaganda akatono: kakira mukwano (or: kakira ekkwano eddene).

Relationship, even remote: is better than friendship. Friendship may cease altogether, but relationship remains. - "Blood is thicker than water".

Akakadde ak'obuggya: amaggwa gakafumita emirundi ebiri.

The old fellow full of envy: the thorns (on the road) pierce him twice. After the first time he does not remove the thorns from the path, because he wishes others to step on them; the second time he forgets that he left them there and steps on them again.

Akamegga enjovu: kenkana we!

A thing that causes an elephant to fall: how small may it be! It is not strength (bulk), but cleverness that beats the mighty.

Akasanke kafunyirira zirwana.

The little "kasanke" (small red finch) encourages the fighting cocks (in order to get feathers for its nest).

This week's proverbs are selected from "Swahili Proverbs from East Africa" [Methali KiSwahili Toka Afrika Mashiriki] by Leonidas Kalugila, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Majuto hayatangulii.

Remorse never comes first.

Moja moja ni fungu kubwa.

One repeatedly is a big bunch.

Siri ni kwa mtu mmoja.

A secret belongs to one person.

Usigonge nguzo ukasingizia giza.

Don't blame the darkness if you bump into a pole.

Yai haliatamii kuku.

An egg never sits (as a hen does when she has eggs) on a hen (i.e. a child is not greater than its parents).

This week's proverbs are selected from "Swahili Proverbs from East Africa" [Methali KiSwahili Toka Afrika Mashiriki] by Leonidas Kalugila, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Anayechanja kuni akieleka, atachanjiwa.

She who fetches firewood with the child on her back will have someone fetch firewood for her.

Asiyeonyeka alipanda mtumbui wa mfinyanzi.

He who did not listen to a warning rode in a boat made of clay.

Kisichoua mchungaji hakiui ng'ombe wote.

That which does not kill a shepherd never kills the whole herd.

Kutangulia sio kufika.

To be the first at the beginning is not to be the first to reach the spot.

Majembe yalimayo pamoja hayakosi kugongana.

Hoes that dig together never miss to knock at one another (i.e. people who stay or work together sometimes quarrel).

This week's proverbs are selected from "Swahili Proverbs from East Africa" [Methali KiSwahili Toka Afrika Mashiriki] by Leonidas Kalugila, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Aachaye kweli huirudia (m.y. Afanyaye mema mahali fulani arudipo hupokelewa vizuri).
He who leaves truth behind, returns to it (i.e. a person who does something good somewhere, when he comes back people receive him/her with gladness).

Afadhali akutembeleaye kuliko akutumiaye salaam.
The one who visits you is better than the one who sends you greetings.

Afadhali kuaibika kuliko kufa (Bukoba).
Better ashamed than dead (Bukoba).

Afadhali kufa kuliko kuaibika (Karagwe).
Better dead than ashamed (Karagwe).

Afadhali kuwa jirani wa mbuga kuliko kuwa jirani wa mwenye mdomo mrefu.
It is better to be a neighbour of a field than to be a neighbour of one who speaks badly.

This week's proverbs are selected from "Luganda Proverbs" by Ferdinand Walser, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

Abafugibwa ngabo: atannagikwatamu ye agitenda obwangu.
Those who are ruled are like the shield: who never got hold of it, thinks it light. Those who don't rule think ruling is easy.

Akamwa k'omuntu: si ka nte.
A man's mouth: is not a cow's mouth (which ruminates).

Amagezi nsejjere: buli efuluma emmula bwayo.
Wisdom is like termite-hills: each one puts out new earth in its own way. Men have their own ways, their own ideas and purposes.

Atamukutte: y'agamba nti "mutenge, tugende!" (or: nti "megga, tugende!").
The one who is not wrestling: says "throw him and let us go". It is easier to give advice than to carry it out.

Atasaba taweebwa: en koko oluba okunywa amazzi ng'eralamira waggulu.
One who does not ask, does not receive: when the chicken is drinking water, it lifts its head to heaven. Even the chicken prays.

This week's proverbs are selected from "Ethiopian Wisdom - Proverbs and Sayings of the Oromo People" by George Cotter, Volume 1 of the African Proverbs Series edited by John S. Mbiti as reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

"Annaatu du-e jedhe / kan thuutho ijolle fithe."

"I am dying of hunger," said the one who finished the child's bottle."

Explanation: A great problem can reduce a person to shameful deeds. (Disgrace, Need)

"Darbatani jinfu hinqabatani."

"After you throw the spear, you cannot catch the end of it."

Explanation: One cannot undo something though one regrets having done it. (Acceptance, Regret)

"Kan qabbanaauf harka / kan houf fal-aana."

"For what is cold, the hand; for what is hot, the spoon."

Explanation: There's always a way to handle something. (Tact)

"Kophaan / udaan tchaala dansa."

"Being alone is only good for going to the toilet."

Explanation: It is good to have friends and companions. (Friendship)

"Maqmaaqsii tokko tokko dubbi fida / tokko tokko dubbi fitha."

"Some proverbs bring a quarrel; and others finish a quarrel."

Explanation: Proverbs are helpful when used properly; otherwise they cause problems. (Carefulness, Proverbs)

This week's selection of proverbs is taken from "Swahili Proverbs from East Africa" (Methali KiSwahili Toka Afrika Mashiriki) by Leonidas Kalugila, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

"Hakuna ukuu wa kunguru panzi zikianguka."

"Raven's age matters not when there are grasshoppers."

"Hata paka ana visharubu."

"Even a cat has whiskers." (i.e. Having whiskers is not a guarantee of masculinity.)

"Hebu kiishe, huchoma mkia."

"He who waits until the whole animal is visible spears its tail."

"Kiaribucho urafiki ni kukopa na kuazima."

"That which spoils friendship is borrowing and lending."

"Palipofia ndege hapakosi manyoya."

"Where a bird died there are always feathers."

All proverbs are from the book "*The Voice of the People; Proverbs of the Basotho*" by 'Makali I. Mokitimi, Volume 4 in the African Proverbs Series edited by John S. Mbiti, reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

"Khomolimo o nko e metsi."

"The cow: God with a wet nose."

Expl: The importance of a cow to a Mosotho is seen to be like the importance of God to the people, because God gives people life. For their livelihood, the Basotho depend on the many uses of cattle.

"Khotso, pula, nala."

"Peace, rain, prosperity."

Expl: When there is peace and rain people live happier because they will not be fighting; they will plough their fields and will have food.

"Ho tsoala ke ho epa thaba."

"To give birth is to dig a mountain."

Expl: Children are wealth to a family.

"Tlala e lala tlas'a sesiu."

"Famine sleeps under the grain basket."

Expl: One never knows what tomorrow will bring.

"Seso se monate ha se ngoauoa ke mong a sona."

"A sore is soothing when it is the owner who scratches it."

Expl: Men love in themselves what they hate in others.

This week's selection of proverbs is taken from the book "*Luganda proverbs*" by Ferdinand Walser reprinted on the African Proverbs CD.

"Abangi tebawulira: wabula enkuba y'ebawuliza."

"A whole crowd does not obey: but rain makes them listen."

They run away and take shelter. It takes a powerful personality to rule a crowd.

"Abangi: tiwabula atoma (= anyiiga)."

"Where there are many: somebody will be offended."

"Abantu balamu: omwennyango bagweyokya balaba."

"People are like the stinging nettle: they get stung by it whilst seeing it."

They run into trouble with open eyes.

"Abasajja nsolo: ezimu zirya zinnaazo."

"Men are like wild animals: some eat their own kind."

Said of people who bully others: tyrants, despots, dictators etc.

"Abataka abaagalana: be balima akambugu."

"Farmers who like each other: dig up the lumbugu (grass)."

They do not quarrel about digging up the weeds on their common boundary.

All proverbs for this week are selections from the book, "*Hearing and Keeping: Akan Proverbs*" (Ghana) by Kofi Asare Opoku. This book is Volume 2 in the African Proverbs series and edited by John S. Mbiti.

"Onipa baako nsa nkata Nyame ani."

"A single hand (of a person) cannot cover the sky."

Although the Akan use the word Nyame for God who is essentially a spirit, they use the same word, on occasion, for the sky. The proverb suggests that one person's hand cannot cover the sky, it will take many hands to accomplish that task. Cooperation and mutual help lead to the accomplishment of difficult tasks.

"Onipa ho anto no a, na efi ne nneyee."

"If a person is unhappy, the cause lies in his or her conduct."

Unhappiness in life is often caused by a person's own conduct; and the proverb emphasizes the need for taking personal responsibility for some of life's negative experiences, instead of putting the blame on someone else.

"Onipa a wahintiw awu no, wontutu mmirika nko n'ayiase."

"One does not run to the funeral of a person who died by stumbling over a stone."

It is important to learn from the mistakes of others (which led to injury or death) in order not to repeat them.

"Onipa fa adamfo ansa na wanya amane." "It is better for a person to make friends first before he or she gets into trouble."

In time of trouble, one may or may not know anybody but if that person had made friends earlier, they would come to help him or her. The proverb advises us not to wait till trouble comes before looking for someone to befriend so that that person can help us.

"Onipa anim nye ahina na woapun mu daa."

"The human face is not like a water-pot which should be smoked and freshened everyday."

The Akan use pots to store drinking water; and to keep the water fresh, the pot is cleaned and smoked regularly. This practice led to this proverb; for rebuking or reprimanding a person, is like washing and cleaning that person's face. A person should therefore avoid actions which would call for rebuke everyday.

All proverbs are selections from the book *Wit and Wisdom from West Africa* compiled by Richard F. Burton. Proverbs are written in both their Ga (or Accra) and English translations respectively.

"Sikpon ko enyee gbonyo."

"No land hates a dead body."

"Ke okpongo edsim le, moni ta eno le hu edsimko."

"If the horse is mad, he who sits upon it is not also mad."

"Nu ni ake-bagbe la le, ataoole kronkron."
"Clear water is not wanted for quenching fire."

"Ake hinmeii enyo kwee to mli."
"Not with both eyes people look into a bottle."

"Adudon ni kpa gbonyo hewo le, ekele ate."
"A fly which hovers around a dead body will go with it."

This week's proverbs are selections from the book *Wit and Wisdom from West Africa* compiled by Richard F. Burton. Each proverb is posted with its Oji and English translations respectively.

"Wo to adur-a ebi ka w'ano."
"If you lay poison (i.e., attempt to poison others), some will touch your mouth."

"Woye abofra ensirow akotia."
"If you are a child do not deride a short man."
N.B.-Because you do not know whether you may not, when grown up, be in the same predicament.

"Akekire se, ensa ko na ensa ba."
"The tortoise says, The hand goes and the hand comes."
N.B.-Less literally, "if you draw back your hand (i.e. give me no presents), I draw back mine." It means, as you behave to me so shall I behave to you.

"Wo yem ye-a, womfa wo yirre nyke."
"If you are good-natured, you will not give away your wife."
N.B.-A good man should be thoroughly attached to his family.

"Ohia na ma odece ye akoa."
"Poverty makes a free man become a slave."

"The man who has bread to eat does not appreciate the severity of a famine." Yoruba proverb

"He is a fool whose sheep runs away twice." Oji (Ashanti) proverb

"Copying everyone else all the time, the monkey one day cut his throat." Zulu proverb

"Where there is no shame, there is no honor." Congo proverb

"Happiness can grow from only a little contentment." Pygmy proverb

"Always being in a hurry does not prevent death, neither does going slowly prevent living." Ibo proverb

"If you understand the beginning well, the end will not trouble you." Ashanti proverb

"When the brothers fight to the death, a stranger inherits their father's estate." Ibo proverb

"When the mouse laughs at the car, there is a hole nearby." Benin proverb

"A chattering bird builds no nest." Cameroon proverb

"Sticks in a bundle are unbreakable." Bondei proverb

"Work is the medicine for poverty." Yoruba proverb

"You are beautiful; but learn to work, for you cannot eat your beauty." Congo proverb

"The rain does not recognize anyone as a friend; it drenches all equally." Ibo proverb

"Pride only goes the length one can spit." Congo proverb

"One falsehood spoils a thousand truths." Ashanti proverb

"He who hates, hates himself." Zulu proverb

"Money is sharper than a sword." Ashanti proverb

"Hate has no medicine." Ghanaian proverb

"He who is guilty is the one that has much to say." Ashanti proverb

"Ingratitude is sooner or later fatal to its author." Twi proverb

"Everybody loves a fool, but nobody wants him for a son." Malinke proverb

"God! I am in your hands! What you say will happen! Nothing baffles you!" Ibo prove

"Sorrow is like rice in the store; if a basketful is removed everyday, it will come to an end at last."
Somali proverb

"By the time the fool has learned the game, the players have dispersed." Ashanti proverb

"We will water the thorn for the sake of the rose." Kanem proverb

"He who treats you as himself does you no injustice." Lon proverb

"Words are sweet, but they never take the place of food." Ibo proverb

"Ndiobaga muniku." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"I don't roast seeds."

"Ni ithiga ukwire yerie ngwenje." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"You are telling a stone to prepare for a haircut."

"Nibubire coro na kuria kwarie." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"You blew the flute on the wide side."

"Mwigiritania na tkwora ndaturaga ngi." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"Whoever leans on a rotting body lacks no flies."

"Ciakuraca tricaga mburto." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"Strangers eat keenly."

"Yakaira yuraga we kianagima." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"A goat that is loose listens not to the voice of the shepherd."

"Gutiri umenyaga ikirwa ta akifetwa." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"No one knows caution as regrets."

"Gutiri mwii na mucuthiriria." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"There is no thief and tie onlooker."

"Ciutiri umenyaga kwefera atari mukune." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"If he has never been beaten/hit."

"Muthii ndaumbikaga ndigu." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"Whoever walks out cannot leave a banana on the fire."

"Cia muka mukari iricagwa muithenya wa wambura." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"Those of the mean people are consumed on the celebration day."

"Mucera na mukudu akundukaga wa take." Kimbeere -- Embu Dialect (Kenya)
"Whoever walks with unworthy people becomes unworthy."

"Umoja ni nguvu, utengano ni udhaifu." Kiha (Tanzania)
"Unity is strength, division is weakness."

"Alalaye usimwamshe, ukimwamsha utalala wewe." Kiha (Tanzania)
"Let dogs sleep, otherwise if anything done against them is a problem."

"Akipenda chongo huona kengeza." Kiha (Tanzania)
"The one who sees the beauty doesn't see the difference."

"Apandaye haba, huvuna haba." Kiha (Tanzania)
"He/She who farm little harvest less."

"Akufaaye kwa dhiki ndiye rafiki." Kiha (Tanzania)
"A friend in need is a friend in deed." 12/18/02

"Ada ya mja hunena, mwugwana ni kitendo." Kiha (Tanzania)
"A lazy person talks for so long, a determinant does."

"Mtoto wa mfalme hutinga kwao ndani." Kiha (Tanzania)
"The Prince/Princess has all rights in his/her home."

"Kazana kulima, vyakupewa havitoshelezi." Bena (Tanzania)
"Struggle to farm, gifts can't satisfy your needs."

"Mazishi ni yetu wote." Bena (Tanzania)
"Funeral is for us all."

"Usipokula huwezi kutoa baraka." Bena (Tanzania)
"If you don't eat, you can't give blessing."

"Mungu ni mkuu wa yote." Bena (Tanzania)
"God is greater for everything."

"Ukikataa wengi ni mchawi." Bena (Tanzania)
"If you don't agree with the majority, you are a wizard."

"Usipotii wazazi ulilaniwa." Bena (Tanzania)
"If you don't respect your parents, you were cursed."

"Mtoto wa nyoka ni nyoka." - Bena (Tanzania) Proverb
The child of a snake is snake

Usilima hua huli." - Bena (Tanzania) Proverb
If you don't farm you are not eating.

"Kazana kulima, usione wanakula." - Bena (Tanzania) Proverb
Struggle farming, don't see them eating.

"Jembe la mundu ni baba na mama" - Bena (Tanzania) Proverb
Hoe and slash is your father and mother.

"The day a man taste the "sweetness" of a woman,that day he also taste the bitterness" - Igala (Nigeria) Proverb

"A boy who wish to grow into a full man must not waste his time trying to fill the hole his father died trying to fill." - Igala (Nigeria) Proverb

"You don't need pain killers for another man's headache." - Igala (Nigeria) Proverb

Proverbs on God, Humanity and God's Creation

"God does not sleep." Bette proverb

This proverb is taken from Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition by Ryszard Pachocinski, Professors World Peace Academy, Minnesota, 1996. All the proverbs are collected from Nigeria.

Proverbs on God, Humanity and God's Creation

"The world sees the mouth, God sees the stomach." Igala proverb

This proverb is taken from Proverbs of Africa: Human Nature in the Nigerian Oral Tradition by Ryszard Pachocinski, Professors World Peace Academy, Minnesota, 1996. All the proverbs are collected from Nigeria.

"Beauty is an empty calabash." Kundu (Cameroon)

Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women , by Mineke Schipper, Phoenix, Nairobi, 1991.

"Don't interrupt a woman fetching water." Namibia

Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women , by Mineke Schipper, Phoenix, Nairobi, 1991.

"One who seeks a wife does not speak contemptuously of women." Ashanti (Ghana)
This week the proverbs are all from Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women, by Mineke Schipper, Phoenix, Nairobi, 1991. Provider is Joseph Kariuki.

"The man may be the head of the home; the wife is the heart." Gikuyu (Kenya)
proverb from Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women by Mineke Schipper, Phoenix, Nairobi, 1991.

"Mother is God number two." Chewa (Malawi)
proverb from Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women by Mineke Schipper, Phoenix, Nairobi, 1991.

"Your mother is still your mother, though her legs be small." Chewa, Malawi

"Does a man set up a plantation without a wife?" Ganda, Uganda

"Regular work tires a woman but totally wrecks a man." Nairobi, Kenya

"All monkeys can not hung on the same branch."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"Bow-legged person does not hunt antelopes."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"A tractor driver doesn't fear dust."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"A stomach is not carried by a fool."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"Big talkers won't be your in-laws long."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"An orphaned calf licks its own back."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"Only a medicine man gets rich by sleeping."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"No child should be babied while another is offered to the hyena to bite."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"The possessor may become dispossessed."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"One in the woodpile does not laugh at the one in the fire."
- Nairobi, Kenya

"A lone runner says he has legs (runs fast)"
- Nairobi, Kenya

Two roads overcame the hyena.

Matthew 6:24: "No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve God and wealth
- Swahili, Eastern Africa Proverb and Luyia, Kenya:

Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb: In this world there is no rest.

Lamentations 1:3: "Where she [Judah] lives among the nations, she finds no place to rest."

A word in the heart does not win.

Proverbs 31:8: "Open your mouth in behalf of the dumb, and for the rights of the destitute."
- Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

Traveling is learning.

Sirach 39:5: "He travels among the peoples of foreign lands to learn what is good and evil."
- Shona Ethnic Group, Zimbabwe and Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

To be hated by a human being is not to be hated by God.

Matthew 10:28: "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna."
- Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

He whose seeds have not germinated does not put down the seed container.

Philippians 2:12: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling."
- Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

Two guests cannot be entertained satisfactorily at the same time.

Matthew 6:24: "No one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and mammon."
- Gikuyu Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

A child points out to you the direction and then you find your way.

Isaiah 11:6: "A little child shall lead them."
- Luyia Ethnic Group, Kenya Proverb

One person is thin porridge or gruel; two or three people are a handful of stiff cooked corn meal.

Ecclesiastes 4:9,12: "Two are better than one...A threefold cord is not quickly broken."
- Kuria Ethnic Group, Kenya/Tanzania and Ngoreme Ethnic Group, Tanzania Proverb

To laugh at a person with a defective eye while you hide your own defects.

Matthew 7:3: "Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye?"
- Sukuma Ethnic Group, Tanzania Proverb

God's rain falls even on the witch.

Matthew 5:45: "Your Father in heaven sends rain on the righteous
-Fipa Ethnic Group, Tanzania Proverb

"What goes into the stomach is not lasting."

Mark 7:18-19: "Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer."
- Sukuma Ethnic Group, Tanzania Proverb

"Suppression of hunger leads to death."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"Only someone else can scratch your back."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"The eyes of the in-law belittle what they have seen."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"The broken plate cannot be rejoined."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"The blame of the antelope is on the hunter."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"The greedy one swells the stomach."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"The fire burns the fire maker."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"You only make a bridge where there is a river."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"We can't depend on one brave man."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"Tongue is lightning."

- Luyia, Western Kenya

"The lame knows how to fall."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"The fool hid what would eat him."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"The Devil turns against its friend."

- Luyia, Western Kenya

"Misery loves company."

- Luyia, Western Kenya - from various published and unpublished sources including Mirimo, Wako and Odaga.

"He who feeds you keeps an eye on you."

"He who does not leave with a stone (says) the stone is warm."

- Luyia, Western Kenya - from various published and unpublished sources including Mirimo, Wako and Odaga.

"Every frog has its poison."

- Luyia,Western Kenya

"Even an expert swimmer drowns."

- Luyia, Western Kenya

"Competition exhausted the lungs."

- Luyia, Western Kenya

"Blind belief is dangerous."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"Bad dancing does not brake an engagement."

- Luyia , Western Kenya

"A messenger cannot be beaten ."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"A Dog that steals sells its body."

- Luyia proverbs , Western Kenya

"A Champion bull starts from birth."

- Luyia. Western Kenya

"The pillar of the world is hope."

- Kanuri proverb, Nigeria

"A tree not taller than an ant cannot shade you."

- Kanuri proverb, Nigeria

"He who marries a real beauty is seeking trouble."

- Accra proverb, Ghana.

"The young can't teach traditions to the old."

- Yoruba proverb

"There is no medicine against old age."

- Accra proverb, Ghana

"That man's a fool whose sheep flees twice."

- Oji proverb.

"When your mouth stumbles, it's worse than feet."

- Oji proverb.

"Hold a true friend with both hands."

- Kanuri proverb, Nigeria

"The pillar of the world is hope."

- Kanuri proverb, Nigeria.

"One does not love if one does not accept from others."

- Kanuri proverb, Nigeria.

"Rising early makes the road short."

- Wolof proverb, Senegal.

"It is better to walk than curse the road."

- Wolof proverb, Senegal

"If there is cause to hate someone, the cause to love has just begun."

- Wolof proverb, Senegal.

"Children will hate all those who give all things to them."

- Wolof proverb, Senegal.

"The teeth of a man serve as a fence."

- Wolof proverb, Senegal.

"We add wisdom to knowledge."

- Kalenjin (Kenya)

"A hyena cannot smell its own stench."

- Kalenjin (Kenya)

"Do not follow a person who is running a way."

- Kalenjin (Kenya)

"We should put out fire while it is still small."

- Kalenjin (Kenya)

"Water can not be forced uphill."

- Kalenjin (Kenya)

"The eye is a coward."

- Kalenjin (Kenya) Proverbs from Oral literature of the Kalenjin by C.Chesaina published by Heinemann Kenya, 1991.

"We should talk while we are still alive."

- Kalenjin (Kenya) Proverbs from Oral literature of the Kalenjin by C.Chesaina published by Heinemann Kenya, 1991.

"Even a friend can not rescue one from old age."

- Kalenjin (Kenya) Proverbs from Oral literature of the Kalenjin by C.Chesaina published by Heinemann Kenya, 1991.

"You can not take away someone's luck."

- Kalenjin (Kenya) (Proverbs from Oral literature of the Kalenjin by C.Chesaina published by Heinemann Kenya, 1991.)

"There is no bad patience."

- (Knappert, p. 46, Swahili).

"A low-class man will just talk; deeds are the hallmark of a gentleman."

- (Knappert, p. 84, Swahili).

"God is our neighbour when our brother is absent."

- (Knappert, p. 33, Swahili).

"A donkey knows no gratitude."

- (Knappert, p. 138, Swahili).

"The climber of ladders will descend [the ambitious person will be brought back down]."

- (Knappert, p. 93, Swahili).

"The good looks of a moron do not stay that way for long."

- Ethiopia (Ayele, p. 23, Amharic).

"The haughty blind person picks a fight with his guide."

- Ethiopia (Ayele, p. 69, Amharic).

"The best of mankind is a farmer; the best food is fruit."

- Ethiopia (Ayele, p. 110, Amharic).

"Do not vacillate or you will be left in between doing something, having something and being nothing."

- Ethiopia (Ayele, p. 91, Amharic).

"It is foolhardy to climb two trees at once just because one has two feet."

- Ethiopia (Ayele, p. 32, Amharic).

"Though the lion and the antelope happen to live in the same forest, the antelope still has time to grow up." (Dzobo #174). (God allows some antelope to escape; they are not extinct.)

- Cape Coast, Ghana

"When you are at home, your troubles can never defeat you." [because your relatives will come to your aid] (Dzobo #118).

- Cape Coast, Ghana

"A stranger does not skin a sheep that is paid as a fine at a chief's court."

- Cape Coast, Ghana (Dzobo #25).

"The orphan does not rejoice after a heavy breakfast."

- Cape Coast, Ghana (Dzobo #191). (He knows that lunch, dinner and tomorrow are still in doubt.)

"The chicken is never declared innocent in the court of hawks."

- Cape Coast, Ghana (Dzobo #137).

"He flees from the roaring lion to the crouching lion." Sechuana (Plaatje, #568). Sechuana

"A crime eats its own child." Sechuana (Plaatje, #415).

"A sorcerer has no distinctive colour." Sechuana (Plaatje, #423).

"He has not married a woman; for she is [the equal of] a man." Sechuana (Plaatje, #159).

"People know each other better on a journey." (Plaatje, #37).

"Let rats shoot arrows at each other." Sudan (Miller, p. 4).

"Do not tell the man carrying you that he stinks." Sierra Leone (Miller, p. 34).

"You suffer from smoke produced by the firewood you fetched yourself." Luhya, Kenya (Miller p. 22).

"A man who dictates separates himself from others." Somalia (Miller, p. 9).

"Be on the alert, like the red ant that moves with its claws wide open." Uganda (Miller, p. 27).

"Instruction in youth is like engraving in stones." Berber, North Africa (Stewart, p. 150)

"To be happy in one's home is better than to be a chief." Yoruba, Nigeria (Stewart, p. 114).

"The elephant never gets tired of carrying its tusks". Vai, Liberia (Stewart, p. 31)

"By coming and going, a bird weaves its nest." Ashanti, Ghana (Stewart, p. 30).

"(It is better that) trials come to you in the beginning (and you find peace afterwards) than that they come to you at the end." (Walser #5430).Luganda, Uganda

"You are sitting in peace (unharmed): as the nose of a cow that feeds among thorn trees and shows no scars." (Walser, #4583).Luganda, Uganda

"The rainmaker who doesn't know what he's doing will be found out by the lack of clouds." Luganda, Uganda (Walser, #796).

"One who is crazy for meat hunts buffalo." [the most dangerous game animal] (Walser #524).
Luganda, Uganda

The one who says, "My home is peaceful," buys millet (for brewing beer). [Meaning: a foolish act -- when the beer is drunk, the peace of the home will be upset] (Walser, #413).

"One person is thin porridge or gruel; two or three people are a handful of stiff cooked corn meal."
- Kuria, Kenya/Tanzania and Ngoreme, Tanzania

"God's rain falls even on the witch."
- Fipa, Tanzania

"That which is good is never finished."
- Sukuma, Tanzania

"One who sees something good must narrate it."
- Ganda, Uganda

"To be praised is to be lost."
- Kikuyu, Kenya. (Wanjohi, p. 136).

"The one chased away with a club comes back, but the one chased away with reason does not."
- Kikuyu, Kenya. (Wanjohi, p. 202).

"He who refuses to obey cannot command."

- Kikuyu, Kenya. (Wanjohi, p. 208).021902

"He who refuses to obey cannot command."

- Kikuyu, Kenya. (Wanjohi, p. 208).

"If one is roasting two potatoes, one of them is bound to get charred."

- Kikuyu, Kenya. (Wanjohi, p. 100).

"Goodness gets a seat."

- Igala, Nigeria. (Pachocinski, p. 224; explanation: good people will be shown favors and will live longer).

"The frog does not run in the daytime for nothing."

- Igbo, Nigeria. (Pachocinski, p. 273)

"Do they prepare leather [for a battle shield] the day they fight?"

- Zar, Nigeria. (Pachocinski, p. 346)

"The cock crows, the idle person grumbles."

- Yoruba, Nigeria. (Pachocinski, p. 144).

"When cutting, look at the age of the machete."

- Fulfulde, Nigeria. (Pachocinski, p. 202)

"A home without a mother is a desert."

- (Eritrean proverb)

"A camel does not joke about the hump of another camel."

- (Guinea proverb)

"When an elephant combats, it is the grass that suffers."

- (Kikuyu proverb)

"Elderliness is not a disease, but a richness."

- (Kiganda proverb)

"When others have received, you may still receive, because God is always present."

- (Burundian proverb)

"Those who respect the elderly pave their own road toward success."

- (African proverb)

"The tracks of the elephant cancels those of the antelope."

- (Duala proverb)

"If you are a flag follow the wind."

- (Swahili proverb)

"The wiseman's promises are like dew on the field."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"The goat eats the grass there where it is tied."

- (Bamoun proverb)

"If you are a flag follow the wind."

- (Swahili proverb)

"There is no hiding place on the water surface."

- (Balari proverb)

"The villager who always complains and is never satisfied with anything is like an annoying flea on the foot."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"Wind makes more noise among the trees."

- (Kikuyu proverb)

"Remember, after the storm there will be a rainbow."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"When the webs of the spider join, they can trap a lion."

- (Ethiopian proverb)

"When your finger is in pain, your sight is not lazy."

- (Ekonda proverb)

"Disease and disasters come and go like rain, but health is like the sun that illuminates the entire village."

- (Luo proverb)

"Good actions are nourishment for youths, much more than words."

- (North African proverb)

"The rain falls on only one roof."

- (Cameroon proverb)

"When the lion gets old even flies attack him."

- (Wadchagga proverb)

"It is better to have no law than not enforcing it."

- (Bantu proverb)

"The owner of the house knows where his roof leaks."

- (Bornu proverb)

"Who wakes and rises at the first cry of the songbird collects the best fruit of the night."
- (Beti proverb)

"The leopard's skin is beautiful, but his heart evil."
- (Baluba proverb)

"Who listens to the voice of the elderly is like a strong tree; who turns a deaf ear is like a twig in the wind."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"A lie can annihilate a thousand truths."
- (Ashanti proverb)

"No matter how full the river is, it wants to swell further."
- (Congolese proverb)

"During a storm you do not take shelter under just one roofing tile."
- (Bayansi proverb)

"Only what you have combated for will last."
- (Yoruba proverb)

"The wise are as rare as eagles that fly high in the sky."
- (Bantu proverb)

"Working in the fields is hard, but hunger is harder."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Where the cattle does not graze, the warriors pass."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Evil penetrates like a needle and then becomes like an oak tree."
- (Ethiopian proverb)

"The drums of war are the drums of hunger."
- (South African proverb)

"The death of an elderly man is like a burning library."
- (Ivorian proverb)

"A dog knows the places he is thrown food."
- (Acholi proverb)

"If the tiger sits, do not think it is out of respect."
- (Nilotic proverb).

"Once the mushroom has sprouted from the earth, there is no turning back."
-(Luo proverb)

"The hunter that speaks too much, goes home empty handed."
-(Nilotic proverb)

"Hunger pushes the hippopotamus out of the water."
- (Luo proverb)

"A dog knows the places he is thrown food."
- (Acholi proverb)

"A child's lie is like a dead fish in a pond that in the end, always comes to the surface", explains his mother.
- (Luo proverb)

"If the metal is not good, you cannot take it out on the blacksmith."
- (Ekonda proverb)

"The owner of the dog does not obey his dog."
- (Pigmei proverb)

"If he is not lost, do not look for him."
- (Baoul, proverb)

"Asking questions is not silly."
- (Swahili proverb)

"If you kill a little hippopotamus, you also kill his mother."
- (Bangala proverb)

"Every stream has its source."
- (Zulu proverb)

"Every man leaves his footprints."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Equality is difficult, but superiority is painful."
- (Serere proverb)

"A sandstorm passes; the stars remain."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"The injured animal is covered with flies."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"A village without elderly is like a well without water."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"A father without sons is like a bow without arrows."
-(Nilotic proverb)

"Old and new millet seeds end up in the same mill."
- (Acholi proverb)

"A dog does not enter a home where they suffer from hunger."
- (Mongo proverb)

"A nice day, a gift for a street peddler".
- (Swahili proverb)

"If you do not seal the holes, you will have to rebuild the walls".
- (Swahili proverb)

"Who mistrusts everybody is the real enemy of the village".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"I have to learn how to walk on three legs says the hyena for when I am old".
- (Bambara proverb)

"Passion and hatred are children of intoxicating beverages".
- (Azande proverb)

"The tail of the cow watches to the right and left".
- (Wadchagga proverb)

"The heart of an evil person is never pure".
- (Bamileke proverb)

"Who guards two termite hills, returns empty handed".
- (Bahaya proverb)

"It is easier to transport an ant hill than exercise authority in a village".
- (Mongo proverb)

"The day never turns back again".
-(Tupur proverb)

"If you chase away an ant, all the ants will come and bite you".
-(Pigmei proverb)

"A youth that does not cultivate friendship with the elderly is like a tree without roots".
- (Ntomba proverb)

"Also the black cow produces white milk".
- (Mandingue proverb)

"The mouth of an elderly man is without teeth, but never without words of wisdom".

"It is strange! The ox eats hay and the dog eats bread, while the donkey carries wine but drinks water (who works more receives less)".
- (Galla proverb)

"If you shake a dog, you shake his owner".
- (Rwandan proverb)

"Stretch your legs the length of your bed".
- (Swahili proverb) (BO)

"Flies' legs, like the tongue of critics, land on whatever they find".
- (Duala proverb)

"The rich is never satisfied".
- (Bayombe proverb)

"We work on the surface, the depths are a mystery".
- (Bahaya proverb)

"You cannot teach the old gorilla the road".
- (Fang proverb)

"The voyager's path is marked by the stars and not the sand dunes".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"The best blessing for a good harvest is a pumpkin full of sweat".
- (Minah proverb)

"Only the feet of the voyager know the path".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Harsh words hurt more than a poisonous arrow".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Who tells the truth is never wrong".
- (Swahili proverb)

"You cannot hide the smoke of the hut you set on fire".
- (Burundian proverb) (BO)

"You do not teach a giraffe to run".
- (Bantu proverb)

"A pilgrim, even if a sultan, is poor".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"A monkey cannot dare what an elephant can".
- (Duala proverb)

"The thorn will come out from where it went in".
- (Bamileke proverb)

"A friend is like a source of water during a long voyage".

- (Nilotic proverb). (BO)

"If you have a lot, give some of your possessions; if you have little; give some of your heart."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"A mother's tenderness for her children is as discreet as the dew that kisses the earth."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"There is more wisdom in listening than in speaking."

- (Nilotic proverb) (BO)

"A united family eats from the same plate."

- (Kiganda proverb).

"What the chief likes is not always what the youths like."

- (Bamileke proverb)

"A friend works in the light of the sun, an enemy in the dark."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"The bridge is repaired only when someone falls in the water."

- (Somali proverb)

"No matter how early one awakes, the sun does not rise first."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"The mouth makes debts, but the arms pay."

- (Ewe proverb)

"God provides for the blind vulture".

- (Bambara proverb)

"The hunter knows his prey."

- (Nilotic proverb)

"Between brothers, whether the trial is won or lost, makes no difference."

- (Ekonda proverb)

"The river swells from the little streams."

- (Bateke proverb)

"A friend is someone you share the path with".

- (Nilotic proverb)

"Until the snake is dead, do not drop the stick".

- (Ivorian proverb)

"Only a mother can understand the suffering of a son".

- (Arab proverb)

"The bull should be taken by the horns, a man at his word".

- (Bantu proverb)

"A united family eats from the same plate".
- (Kiganda proverb)

"Who does not choose dies of hunger".
- (Arab proverb)

"Little by little the bird builds its nest".
- (Moussi proverb)

"The words of the elderly are as sweet as honey, but if you do not listen they become as sour as bile".
- (Arab proverb)

"Discord between the powerful is a fortune for the poor".
- (Arab proverb)

"A knife does not fear thorns, a woman fears man".
- (Mongo proverb)

"Youths are like waves of the sea, the elderly have strength instead of tide".
-(Arab proverb)

"Youths talk first and then listen, the elderly listen and then talk".
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Where there are poor, there are rich. But where there is justice, they are all brothers".
- (Arab proverb)

"The wind does not break a tree that bends".
- (Sukuma proverb)

"In the desert of life the wise travel by caravan, while the fool prefers to travel alone".
-(Arab proverb)

"Who made the drum knows best what is inside".
- (Burundian proverb) (BO)

"Man is like a palm on the beach; moving with the wind of life".
- (Arab proverb)

"The jaws have nothing to chew if the feet do not walk".
-(Bakusu proverb)

"Who digs the well should not be refused water."
- (Swahili proverb)

"One is not born a warrior, you become one."
- (Arab proverb)

"A friend is like a water source for a long journey."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"The thoughts of the wise are like stars in the galaxy: never ending."
- (North African)

"The men are the wool of the tribe, but the women are the ones who weave the pattern."
- (Arab proverb)

"Do not wait until tomorrow to hunt."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Those who waste time only hurt themselves."
- (North African proverb)

"Youths look at the future, the elderly at the past, our ancestors live in the present."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"When a lion roars, he does not catch game".
- (Acholi proverb)

"A guest is a gift, a thief a tragedy."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"The wisdom of the elderly is like the sun, it illuminates the village and the great river."
- (Nilotic proverb)

"Who does not understand a look, cannot understand long explanations."
- (Arabic proverb)

"A rich man who does not know himself is worth less than a poor man who does".
- (Burundian proverb)

"During the dry season it is better to befriend the owner of the pirogue".
- (African proverb)

"The tears running down your face do not blind you".
- (Togolese proverb)

"You can live without a brother but not without a friend".
- (Arabic proverb)

"The worm that gnaws on the bean is the one inside the bean".
- (Congolese proverb)

"Loving someone that does not love you is like loving the rain that falls in the forest".
- (Western African proverb)

"Love is like a rice plant; transplanted, it can grow elsewhere".
- (Madagascan proverb)

"Walking in two is medicine".
- (Macua proverb, Mozambique)

Alone a youth runs fast, with an elder slow, but together they go far.
- Luo proverb.

Charity is a silent prayer.

- Arabic proverb.

A man's heart is not a sack open to all.

- Rwandan proverb.

A mother is like a kernel, crushed by problems but strong enough to overcome them.

- Balari proverb.

Do not put your head in front of your words.

- Tupuri proverb. (BO)

An empty sack cannot stand.

- Mandingue proverb.

The heart is not a knee, it does not bend.

- Peul proverb.

When your beard appears, childhood disappears.

- Rwandan proverb.

The same water never runs into the same river.

- Ethiopian proverb.

An undecided man is the worst disaster of the village.

- Nilotic proverb.

Where there is abundance, there is poverty.

- Palestinian proverb.

Who has no past, has no future.

- Palestinian proverb.

If you are injured by a thorn, you will be healed by a thorn.

- Toma proverb.

Where a river flows, there is abundance.

- Nilotic proverb.

Hearing is not seeing.

- Swahili proverb.

A generous man must eat if he wants to continue to be one.

- Nilotic proverb.

Words can kill before arms.

- Nilotic proverb.

A village without elderly is like a tree without roots.

- Nilotic proverb.

Intelligence is a fruit picked in the neighbour's garden.

- Batabwa proverb.

Who created thunder does not fear it.

- Bahunde proverb.

Eyes watch but cannot take.

- Bahaya proverb.

When your neighbour is wrong you point a finger, but when you are wrong you hide.

- Ekonda proverb.

You only understand the joys of parenthood when you have your first child, you only understand the mystery of death when in mourning.

- Bahaya proverb.

Equality is not easy, but superiority is painful.

- Serere proverb.

The monkey is a thief because it does not work.

- Tupuri proverb.

You think of water when the well is empty.

- Ethiopian proverb.

If you really love something, your fate is in its hands.

- Tupuri proverb.

It is easier to transport a termite hill than have authority in a village.

- Duala proverb.

One should not beg with a basket.

- Duala proverb.

Who has shoes does not fear thorns.

- Ewe proverb.

Drums are never beat without reason.

- Kiganda proverb.

Eggs and metal should not be put in the same sack.

- Ewe proverb.

The youth walks faster than the elderly but the elderly knows the road.

- Nilotic proverb.

The bird has no nest, but a branch to rest on.

- Bangwana proverb.

Who does not know the path should ask.

- Nilotic proverb.

The heart is not a knee, it does not bend.

- Peul proverb.

A trial between brothers has no winners or losers.

- Ekonda proverb.

Rumours generate misunderstandings.

- Libinza proverb.

One glass can ruin all the beer.

- Tupuri proverb.

It is easy to pull a thorn out of someone else's skin.

- Burundian proverb.

The wise man never takes a step too long for his leg.

- Egyptian proverb.

The river swells with the contribution of the small streams.

- Bateke proverb.

If your corn field is far from your home, the birds will eat your corn.

- Pigmei proverb.

What the people think cannot be denied.

- Basakata proverb.

Those who do not listen to the voice of the elderly are like trees without roots.

- Luo proverb.

An abundance of food at your neighbour's will not satisfy your hunger.

- Bayaka proverb.

'War has no eyes.'

- Swahili proverb.

'If a father does not cultivate, the son does not inherit land.'

- Ekonda proverb.

'Beating drums is fun, but also tiring.'

- Bangala proverb.

'Only God generates, man only educates.'

- Rwandan proverb.

'You learn how to cut down trees cutting them down.'

- Bateke proverb.

'A wrong step by the leader is a warning for those following.'

- Bayombe proverb.

'When in someone else's home leave your defects at the door.'

- Rwandan proverb.

'It is better to be kind to our neighbors than to cross the world to offer incense to our ancestors.'

- (no language group given)

'Happiness is like a field you can harvest every season.'

Luo proverb.

'You do not run into mountains, but people yes.'
Herero proverb.

'If you want something, you must work for it.'
Tupuri proverb.

'The earth is not an inheritance of our fathers, nor one for our sons.'
Luo proverb.

'A friend is someone who walks by your side.'
Luo proverb.

'If you educate a woman, you have educated a population.'
- Kiganda proverb.

'The leopard does not eat fish (explanation: the chief does not handle irrelevant problems).'
- Ekonda proverb.

'The chief's wisdom is a mesh of old stories, good and bad.'
- Luo proverb.

'You can see the source of a river, but not that of a clan.'
- Bayansi proverb.

'The frog does not tire in the water.'
- Ngandi proverb.

'Who built the drum knows best what is inside.'
- Burundian proverb.

'You take a bull by the horns and a man by his words.'
- Bantu proverb.

'The sore is cured but the scar remains.'
- Ekonda proverb.

'When you eat an egg do not insult the chicken.'
- Bantandu proverb.

'Wearing a mended dress is better than being naked.'

'God does not ask to withstand more than is possible.'
- Amara proverb.

'Once the manioc is in your stomach it's gone.'
- Nyang proverb.

'To start a fight, one does not bring a knife that cuts but a needle that sews.'
- Bahumbu proverb.

'A village united in fraternity is prosperous.'

- Bayaka proverb.

'A village without elderly is unhappy.'

- Luo proverb.

'When you need to make an important decision, never do it alone, choose the right people.'

- Basakata proverb.

'A fool is like a wanderer lost on a path.'

- Luo proverb.

'The wind effects leaves, while violence men.'

- Ovimbundu proverb.

'When the leg does not walk, the stomach does not eat.'

Mongo proverb.

'One speaks badly of the absent but fears the present.'

Lula proverb.

'Eggs and metal do not go in the same basket.'

Ewe proverb.

'You can hide a mark on your skin, but not a defect.'

Burundian proverb.

'What is hanging up, cannot be reached sitting down.'

Amhara proverb.

'The heart is a locket that does not open easily. Duala proverb.

'Money is like the waters of a swelling river, it flows away.'

Ga proverb.

'The laziness of youths is worse than war.'

Tupuri proverb.

'Every course of water has its source.'

Zulu proverb.

'The turtle does not suffer when running.'

Luo proverb

'The dog never forgets its owner.'

Bangala proverb

'You do not beat a drum with one finger.'

Luo proverb

'Who walks in the mud, at some point must clean his feet.'

Bahumbu proverb

'Who gets lost in the forest takes it out on who leads him back to the right road.'
Ekonda proverb.

'You are not born a leader, you become one.'
Bamileke proverb.

'Where there is a hippopotamus, be careful when passing with a pirogue.'
Nilotic proverb.

'Who eats too much, will then be sick.'
Batabwa proverb.

'Who takes a hut, also takes the rats and cockroaches.'
Ntomba proverb.

'Hunger makes the big fish come out of hiding in the great river.'
Nilotic proverb.

'The predator lands on an unknown tree.'
Duala proverb.

'The venomous snake cannot be seen in the Savannah.'
Nilotic proverb.

'Do not grab your heel until the ant has bitten you.'
Ekonda proverb.

'You cannot hear a baby cry in the mother's womb.'
Bamfinu proverb.

'Authority is in generosity.'
Tumbuka proverb.

'The chicken that digs for food will not sleep hungry.'
Bayombe proverb.

'The mouse says: I dig a hole without a hoe; the snake says: I climb a tree without arms.'
Basonge proverb.

'The mouth does not eat if the feet do not walk and the hands work.'
- Bakusu proverb

'To form a dog is the ruin of education. '
-Ekonda proverb

'The hyena sleeps with the sheep.'
- Burundian proverb

'During a storm you seek shelter under a tree and not the clouds.'
- Bayansi proverb

'You cannot handle fire with your hands.'
- Kanuri proverb (CO)

'Every hill has its leopard.'

- Bahaya proverb (CO)

'A goat does not always graze in the same place. '

- Duala proverb (CO)

'In the great river there are large and small fish. '

- Ewe proverb (CO)

'Who owns too much, remains unhappy.'

-Tupuri proverb

'The cultivator is alone, but those who eat are many.'

-Schambala proverb

'The leopard does not sleep on a dry branch.'

-Pigmy proverb

'A real family eats the same cornmeal.'

-Bayombe proverb

'If your cornfield is far from your house, the birds will eat your corn.'

- Pigmy proverb

'The day does not return.'

-Tupuri proverb

'A puppy must not confront a large animal.'

-Beti proverb

'If you carry the egg basket do not dance.'

-Ambede proverb (CO)

'Where the rooster crows there is a village.'

-Schambala proverb (CO)

'Before killing the chicken carefully observe the character of your guest. '

-Mandingo proverb (CO)

'One rind is enough to tie a thousand pieces of wood'.

(Amhara proverb, Ethiopia)

'If you want to lean on a tree, first make sure it can hold you'.

(Ambede proverb, Gabon and Congo)

'One piece of green wood is enough to stop the others from burning'.

(Bahaya proverb)

Who follows the elephant will have no problems.

(Fante proverb, Ghana)

'Only a fool believes that the clouds obscure the splendour of the moon. It has shined behind them for eternity'.

'The wind does not break a tree that can bend'.
(Sukuma proverb)

'The elephant dies, but his tusks remain'.
(Bamfinu proverb)

'Only the owner can free his home from mice'.
(Bantandu proverb)

'Even your dog knows the homes of your friends'.
(Batetela proverb. The Tatela people live in the Democratic Republic of Congo)

'If the rhythm of the drum beat changes, the dance step must adapt'.
(Kossi proverb. Kossi is spoken in Burkina Fasso, West Africa)

'A stolen object does not fill ones heart with joy'.
(Mongo proverb. Mongo is spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo)

'No one knows if a bird in flight has an egg in its stomach'.
(Dogon proverb. The Dogon are in Mali and Burkina Fasso)

'Those who get on the same pirogue, have the same aspirations'.
(Wolof proverb. Wolof is spoken in Senegal, Gambia and Mauritania)

"Those who arrive to the spring first, drink the purest water".
(Sukuma proverb)

'The thread follows the needle'.
(Batela proverb. Batela is unlisted in Ethnologue)

'Milestone cornmeal unites families'
(Tupur□ proverb. Tupur□ unlisted in Ethnologue)

'The wind helps those without an axe to cut wood'.
(Bamileke proverb. Bamileke is spoken in Cameroon and some parts of Nigeria)

'The moon lightens well but leaves certain areas in the dark'.
(Vai proverb, Liberia)

'Though the leopard is fierce, it does not devour its cubs'.
(Bantandu proverb, unlisted in Ethnologue)

'A raindrop does not spare the head of the notable'.
(Beti proverb, Cameroon)

'A son will be what he was taught'.
(Swahili proverb, East, Central and South Africa)

'Even the small leopard is called leopard'.
(Bambala proverb, Ethiopia and Kenya)

'Sweet and sour walk hand in hand'.
(Efik proverb, Nigeria)

'We rest our legs, but never our mouths'.
(Bahaya [Haya] proverb, Tanzania)

'The strength of the elderly is in the ears and on the lips'.
(Mossi proverb, Togo, Burkina Fasso and Mali)

'A long voyage begins with just one step'.
(Philippine proverb)

'It is easier to cover our feet with sandals than to cover the earth with carpets'.
(Indian proverb)

'The toad that wanted to avoid the rain fell in the water'.
(Bayansi proverb. Bayansi is possibly related to Yans, in the Democratic republic of Congo)

'A woman's stomach does not grow if she is not pregnant'.
(Kamba, Kenya proverb.)

'Do not insult a crocodile while your feet are still in the water'.
(Nilotic proverb.)

'Even if thin, the elephant remains the king of the forest'.
Duala (Cameroon) proverb.

'If the needle doesn't pass, the thread doesn't follow'.
Ambede (Gabon and Congo) proverb.

'If a bird does not recognise a tree, it will not rest on it'.
Duala (Cameroon) proverb.

'A small axe is not sufficient to cut down a large tree'.
Mongo (Democratic Republic of Congo - former Zaïre) proverb.

'Do not throw away the oars before the boat reaches the shore'.
Mpongue (African) proverb [Mpongue is not listed on Ethnologue]

'The womb is not a boat, it cannot carry as much'.
Douala (Cameroon) proverb

'Even without drumbeats, banana leaves dance'.
Ekonda (Democratic Republic of Congo - former Zaïre) proverb.

'If a frog leaves the swamp for the mountains, it means it is in danger'.
(Bantandu proverb, language unlisted in the Ethnologue database)

'The sun shines during the day, not at night'.
(Mongo proverb - Democratic Republic of Congo)

'A turtle never abandons its carriage'.

(Basuto proverb - South Africa, listed under Suto in Ethnologue)

'The hand assists the foot, but the foot cannot do the same'.

(Mongo proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'Clothes should not be made for an unborn child'.

(Bangala proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'The corpse of a bird does not decompose in flight, but on the ground'.

(Duala proverb, Cameroon)

'You are invited to join the hunt when your nets are in evidence'.

(Ntomba proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'A genius is he who is first to be right'.

(Douala proverb, Cameroon)

'An elephant grows and becomes an adult, even if people do not like it.'

(Vai proverb, Liberia and Sierra Leone)

'The mouth does not forget what it tasted only one time'.

(Bahaya proverb, Tanzania)

'The path leads towards loved ones not thorns'.

(Duala proverb, Cameroon)

'Without effort no harvest will be abundant'.

(Burundian proverb, Burundi)

'A knife does not recognise its owner'.

(Mongo proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'The new moon cannot come until the other has gone'.

(Bahunde or Hunde proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'If you want to clear the land secretly, the noise of the axe will give you away'.

(Ekonda proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo - former Za<re)

'Though it is the hand that gives, the man must be thanked'.

(Basonge proverb)

'A hammer does not work with iron'.

(Mongo proverb. Mongo is a district in Chad. Mongo is also a language spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [former Zaire])

'A leader does not rise for a squirrel'.
(Ngombe proverb)

'A forest cannot be cut with a broken axe'.
(Bantandu proverb)

'The buffalo does not wander from the marsh where it was born'.
(Ngbaka proverb, Ngbaka is spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [former Zaire],
Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic)

'Roots do not know what a leaf has in mind'.
(Mongo proverb, Mongo is a district in Chad. Mongo is also a language spoken in the Democratic
Republic of the Congo [former Zaire],)

'Until the old moon disappears completely, the new moon can not come.'
(Bahunde proverb, Hunde is a language spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [former
Zaire])

'A camel does not tease another camel about his humps'.
(Egyptian proverb)

"Teeth are all friends among each other".
(Galla proverb)

'Pretend you are dead and you will see who really loves you'.
(Bamoun proverb)

'A goat never grazes in the same place'.
(Duala proverb)

'A herdsman must yell to enter the fence'.
(Nilotic proverb)

'Eggs should never be beaten with stones'.
(Sao Tom, proverb)

'Confiding a secret to an unworthy person is like carrying grain in a bag with a hole.'
(Nilotic proverb, African)

'When a mother has twins she must sleep on her back.'
(Peul proverb. The Peul or Fulfulde speaking people live in Senegal, Mali, Burkina Faso, Cameroun,
Chad, Nigeria, Mauritania, Benin, Togo, and Niger.)

"The heart of an adult is like that of an elephant".
(Bantandu proverb, Bantandu is an African language that is unlisted on Ethnologue)

"Even if a baby seems unpleasant to look at, his mother never refuses him".
(Bamoun proverb, Bamoun is spoken in Cameroun)

"You cannot be a mouse and a bat at the same time".
(Betris proverb; Beti is an African language unlisted in Ethnologue.)

"Who does not love to dance, does not love to sing".

(Lango proverb, Lango is the name for two distinct languages spoken in Sudan and Uganda)

"Death is like a dress that, at some point or another, everyone has to wear".

(Mandingo proverb. The Mandingo people live in Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone)

"There is no better mirror than a best friend".

(Cape Verde proverb)

"When weeds invade the land, it means the owner is absent".

(Bahumbu proverb. Humbu is a dialect of Lunda, spoken in Zambia, East Africa.)

"A rooster does not sing on two roofs".

(Ntomba proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo)

"A baby cannot be heard crying in his mother's womb".

(Bamfinu proverb, [Mfinu] Democratic Republic of Congo)

"Only when a tree has grown can you tie your cow to it".

(Jabo proverb, Liberia)

"The skin of the leopard is beautiful, but not his heart".

(Baluba proverb, [Luba-Kasai] Democratic Republic of Congo)

"A person who never travels, believes his mother's cooking is the best in the world".

(Kiganda [African] proverb)

'Death is like a robe everyone has to wear'.

(Mandingo proverb, Guinea)

"Between imitation and envy, imitation is better".

(Ekonda proverb, Democratic Republic of Congo (former Zaire))