

Interview date: 08 11 23

Audio file name: Bassei Leopard and Monkey

Transcribed by HS with TB

HS Notes: This story was recorded when T Bassei was a guest at the DKB compound and drank alcohol continuously the entire time, beginning early each morning. When TB first recorded this story, the memory card filled to capacity about halfway through, so we had him re-record the story. This transcription comes from the second—complete—recording, on a blank memory card. TB had already been drinking and his speech seems a little slurred as a result.

The gist of the story is that Monkey and Leopard were friends. But when the monkeys went somewhere and left their children in Leopard's care, they returned to find that the latter had eaten the children. Leopard later asked them for the medicine in their possession that allowed them to leap through the treetops. They agreed, put one of their older sons inside a "bata" as if the bata were full of medicine, and gave the bata to the leopard, with the stipulation that Leopard should allow no one else to carry the bata the whole way home. They had privately instructed their son to relate to them everything he heard during the journey.

I don't yet understand the logical details of the story completely. But the general idea is that the leopard quite quickly passed the bata on to another person to carry, and that he told that person that when he had drunk the medicine and was able to leap through the treetops like the monkeys, he would eat them all up.

The monkey-child heard everything from inside the bata, and passed on this information to the other monkeys. So the monkeys said they'd never give the leopard the medicine.

TB: Kaage, hani yentupe, ha can.

Monkey, he and Leopard, they sat (together).

ε- ɪɔɔgwε wε, wɔ kɔ na go a γεη,  
At the time that he (Leopard?) would go somewhere,

wɔ go lee apuma wε, tɛm wε wε.  
he would leave his children (with) his neighbor.

Κε kaagε wɔn, wɔ kɔ na go a γεη, apuma ha ha lee na go,  
But when Monkey went somewhere, having left (his) children,

wɔ ce han gbom.  
he wouldn't meet them.

Ha yiye na go γεntupe, wɔ le, bεε, yaηβε, ya ce lan ge.  
When they asked Leopard, he said, "Man, I myself didn't see (them)."

Mm̀m̀.  
No.

Κε- han, pɔmma ma ha yaswan.  
But- they were having medicine.

Ha pengi.  
They (could) jump.

Si ha wun bacε anuin, ha le pengi háá si ha hé yapɔ yan.  
When they climbed the palms, they would jump all the time until they  
crossed to town.  
hé = to cross. JP.

Hani bε, ha le oo-ho. Yi cen pɛi lee apuma hiye yan.  
They themselves, they said "Oh. We will not leave our children here again."

Wati mɔn, wɔnbε hun kohan yan.  
One time, he came to their place.

Wɔ le, bɛɛ, yi han, yi caŋ, han ha pɛŋgi, kɛ yaŋ ya cen pɛŋgi.

He said, “Man, let us make, let’s pass, you all, you jump, but I do not jump.”

JP gives “let us make” for yi han.

Landa le, ha na go le pɔmma ma nu yaswan yɛ,

Thus, if medicine is in your possession,

“han na go le” sounds like “la go yi.”

ha kɛ yi ma pɔm.

then you (should) give us medicine.

Hanbɛ, hanbɛ yumun.

They themselves, they answered.

Ha le, pɔmma ma yi yaswan. Yi mɔ mɔ kɛ.

They said, we do have medicine in our possession. We will give it to you.

Kɛ, hun na go, yi pɛi mɔ go kɛ agbɛna hiyɛ.

But, when we’ve come, we will still give (the matter) to our parents.

JP says that kɛ refers to ‘the matter.’

Sounds like “yi pɛi mɔ ho/ɔ” to me.

Ha le, yɛntupɛ wɔ le, yi kɛ wɔ, ɛ, pɔmma ma hi yaswan.

They said, Leopard said that we should give him the medicine that’s in our possession.

Ma yi pɛŋgi gaa wɔ.

That we teach him to jump.

ma refers to med.

Ha le, yi kɔn cogbonan.

They said, we’ll go discuss.

cogbonan = consult/discuss. JP.

Le ha na kɔn cogbonani,  
When they went to discuss,

yema mɔn, yɛgi ha, wɔ gbulaŋ.  
one boy, their son, he was adolescent.  
gbulaŋ = grown, but not yet fully grown. JP says, “like Bɔkarie” who works  
at the DKB compound. JP.

Ha wɔnbɛ kwi, ha le: Humu yi yoyo yɔngu bɛɛ wɛ.  
They took him, they said: “It’s you who we’ll send to that man.”  
yoyo = to send. JP. But sounds like just yoo on recording.

Kɛ, hi mɔ go cɔŋ bata anɔn.  
But, we will put you inside a bata.

Le hɔyɛ hu na kenye, pande lo muyen, wɔnbɛ hun.  
When day broke, the sun returned, he came.

Yɛntupɛ wɔn. Wɔ le bɛɛ lani la yi na hɔwɛ,  
That leopard. He said, “That man had spoken to us,

landa la ya hunai,  
that’s why I came,”

ha le, bɛɛ, mɔ ke isɔni,  
they said, “Man, you see the dream (?),

ha le, ɛ, mɔ ke isɔni wɛ. Yɛgi ha yen.

Ha yɔgi wɔ yɔn, tɔgi go gbomi kwɛilɪŋ.  
Bring him there, behind the big tree.

Ha le, le nuupɛ lani wɔ mɔ yɔgi, gbí la ya hɔ, la wɔ hɔ la yen, hwi la hɔ?  
They said, when that man carries you, everything that

La(ni) gbí la wɔ hɔ la yení, mui la hɔwɛ.

Oo ya pɛi mɔ kɔ hei?

Ha wɔnbɛ cɔŋ bata anɔn.  
they put him inside the bata.

Ha panti yɛn kɛnɛŋ kɛnɛŋ kɛnɛŋ kɛnɛŋ. Nuɔ ce wɔn ke.  
They tied it very very very well. No one could see him.

Ha wɔnbɛ hɔgi, hutun yɔn.  
They took him out, outside.

Ha le, pɔmma ma yi bɛmpa yɛn.  
They said, “The medicine, we prepared it.

Landa le, hun humu yɔgɛ,  
That’s why, this thing that you carry,

yɔgi na go, ma wuti nuɔ gbɛa yɛn oo,  
once you’ve carried it, don’t (let) another person carry it, o

humu go ce yaswan háá,  
let it stay in your possession all the time,

ku sɔgɛ si yipɛ hum.

Wɔ le, ya ce hun wuti.  
He said, “I will keep carrying it.”

Le wɔ na hinyɛ le paa nuɔ gbɛa wɛ,  
When he just lay down

wɔ na le go joha bɛɛya wɛ háá, wɔ le, hání wɛ.

Kɛngɛ Hɔbatugɛ hun ha hɔgɛ kwɛilɪŋ.

Si ha kɛm pɔmma. Pɔmma pɛngɛga wɛ. Ya ha yipi sɔm fɔ.

Kaagɛ yɛn, wɔ hini go bata yanɔn,

wɔ wɔ go tɛya. Wɔ kɔ wɔ lɔn, ɛ, wɔn, tagbɛn koogi.

Cɔlii-i.

Le hɔyɛ ken na go, wɔ yɛma gun hun, wɔnbɛ ween apuma wɛ,

Wɔ le, hɛ, apuma, lani la ya na hɔwɛ,

ha le, ha kaagɛ, ya go yipi kaagisɛ,

ha ha wuten ipaale, le ham gbɔngi pɔmma wɛ,

yɛ ha yipi ji ipaale.

yɛ = ya le?

Wɔnbɛ ha nuu gbaa wɔn koogi, wɔ yɔgi hun.

Wɔ la gbɔmi go, kaagisɛ. Ha tɔngin.

Ha wɔ kɛ na cɛ, wɔ lɛɔ hin nuu gbaa.

Ha le, can yan, nɛ wun hin.

Tɔgi go gbom kɔ lɔ! Kaagisɛ ha wɔ wom hin.

The big tree was there! The monkeys raised him up.

Ha le, wun hin, wɛi?

They said, "Climb it, hear?"

Ha cεenge lo, nuu mgbaa lani yen,

ha wɔnbε wuti.

Ha le, le nuupuge yen, yɔgi mui, wɔ ho jen vuí?

Wɔ le, jee-e-e-e,

wɔ le, ha gbɔngi na go gbo,

pɔmma ma nuu wε yaswan,

ha pɛngi ga wε?

Wɔ le, wɔn wɔ yipi ji fɔ,

ha ma wɔ gbɔngi, ε- ε- pɔmma wε.

Wɔ na cani go. Hanbε wun koogan yɔn.

Ha le, ke yema yen. Humu ho le,

le gbɔngi na go hum, pɔmma hiye ma,

mu hi yipe jiyε,

ha cen kε pɛi pɔmma.

Lani kíníŋ la ya hɔwε.

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