

Dec., 2005

Dec 25, 2005

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

Wilma S. Jaggard Hobgood

Department of Africa, Division of Overseas Ministries

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

222 South Downey Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46219

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Moonlight does not (enable one to) see (to gather) RAFFIA

* Weji ntenaka mpeka.

What suffices for a small project won't do for an enormous project.

The SALT (we have for seasoning) the chicken is insufficient, and you (go and) kill a goat (besides)!

* Bokwa wa nsoso bofokoke k'ooma nta!

The tiny antelope is smearing his fur with SOOT; the elephant says, "Give me some, to scatter (over my

* Mboloko abis'eliyo; njoku te: "Onka emi,--mpatangai." Mboloko te: "Beliyo befosile.

Misjudging as to one entitled to affection, honor, or condemnation:

The foolish little ANTELOPE cut firewood for the leopard.

* Mboloko ea bolole,--ebunekeji nkoi nkuni. R. 188

The small spotted wild CAT mistook the leopard for a relative!

* Bowane aotanga nkoi eoto!

Dec 18, 2005

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Tasks or burdens to be borne:

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

* Nboloko afaikusa bionjo becw'a njoku.

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

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

Suitable food to last during a long period in camp:

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

* Ntacwaka ifele l'anko.

Great power is adequate for a hard task.
FIRE can soften iron.

* Tsa ifotekya loolo.

A beautiful, but dim light inadequate at times
The beauty of moonlight won't (enable one to) pick up CATERPILLARS.--(OR: --a needle.)

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

Dec 11, 2005

Umbundu Proverbs (Angola)
collected and translated by W.H. Sanders
West Central Africa Mission 1914
A.B.C.F.M. [American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions]1914

Cikete wa wunda; Cindimba (fool) wa kuatako yu wa kuata ondal; o sia okavili konale.
* Appearances are deceitful.

Cimalanga ka ci yoka olondui; avala emuha. (A pongoloka. A sawuka. A sianana).
* Beyond your sphere your importance wanes.

Cimbamba luti wa yonda; omunu lukuavo o yola yola. (Va litavatava.)
* As the ocimbamba seeks the low lying tree so friends gather to the friendly person.

Cimbapo ci li peka; ci li kutima ku cimbipo.

* Useless to warn one who has made up his mind (set his heart on a matter.)

Cimbulumbulu cainusombo wa lepa haye o tine.

* A person of pleasant and agreeable appearance but close and exacting, driver of hard bargains.

Nov., 2005

Nov 27, 2005

Umbundu Proverbs (Angola)

collected and translated by W.H. Sanders

West Central Africa Mission 1914

A.B.C.F.M. [American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions]1914

Ci sole ukombe ukuafeka kececa.

* What the guest would like is what the host is ashamed to offer as not being good enough and the guest

Ci sosa ci laveka, ci lula ci lungula.

* The sweet allures to excess (and then discomfort); the bitter warns.

Ci tokato ci vala ukueka; u o panga onjala o ka kuta.

* If heedless of warning it is you who will suffer, not I.

Ci tunula ci tunda; ci popia omanu ciyapo.

* As that which breaks the soil comes up, so that spoken comes to pass.

Ci tununa ka va feni; oku tunda hako ci lete. * Murder will out.

Nov 20, 2005

Umbundu Proverbs (Angola)

W.H. Sanders

West Central Africa Mission 1914

A.B.C.F.M. [American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions] 1914

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As that which breaks the soil comes up, so that spoken comes to pass.

Ci pekaila songa yohombo, ka ci pekaila songa yombambi, sanga v ku ipa.

When raiders come the early riser escapes; late riser awakes to find himself caught. Early bird gets the v

Ci pepa ci pua, ci vala ci limba.

Nor pain nor pleasure endures.

Ci popia (sika) onoma, yevelela kocileni; ci popia omunu limbuka kondaka apa yi pandekaila.

For drum's utterance listen to the resonance; to catch what a man means consider the point he fetches

Ci posokela volomanda; volonundu veti, Li ende lekumbi.
It makes a difference whose ox is gored.

Ci simba onjimbu ci yova; ci popia omanu ciyapo.
That spoken comes to pass. (the mentioned happens)

Nov 12, 2005

Umbundu Proverbs (Angola)
collected and translated by W.H. Sanders
West Central Africa Mission 1914
A.B.C.F.M. [American Board of Commissioners of Foreign Missions] 1914

Ci kuete ukuene ku ka yole; ekolokolo hanjila.

* Gibe not a neighbor's misfortune, lest in need you get no help and be led off in cords. (ekolokolo, head;

Ci likatula kepungu ocikenge; ukai womopi wa linyalisa la veyahwe wo tavele.

* Scolding woman has self to blame when husband who liked her puts her away.

Ci lila lila onjila, ci limbulula omanu.

* I shall be able to refute his lies about me. The bird utters its cry, people tell the meaning.

Ci linga usumba osanji yi ci.

* A fowl shuns poisonous worm you should know enough to avoid dangerous things.

Ci longa omeke oku lipusula kuti; ci longa omona ohombo utue vombia. (Oku sia velunda).

Nov 06, 2005

From A Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya
Collected and explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha.

Tensoong ekorma eende hai.

* Swahili translation-Sisimizi hawaumani.

* English translation-A black ant will not bite another (black ant).

* Meaning-Although the black ants bite, they do not bite one another. People belonging to the same group do not bite each other.

Omoonto womoonto manyilinga ororme, agaande utwa nagaande omera.

* Swahili translation-Ndugu yako ni sawa na damu iliyo kwenye ulimi. Nyingine unatema na nyingine unakula.

* English translation-Someone relative is blood of the tongue, some you spit out and some you swallow.

* Meaning-When it is the near relative who has committed something bad, you will both blame him and eat his tongue.

Hano irireengo rerwa ho, nensaragena igwikara ho.

* Swahili translation-Mwamba unapoondoka, kokoto huchukua nafasi.

* English translation-When the rock is not around, the small stone sits there.

* Meaning-When the person in authority is away, the one who is junior will replace him. This is told to encourage people to be ready to take over when the leader is absent.

Keno getana omogaambi ngusikakere.

* Swahili translation-Nchi isiyokuwa na kiongozi husambaratika.

* English translation-A country without a leader collapses.

* Meaning-A country without a leader will not succeed. In a group, it is important to have a leader.

Hano wanekera nkwihumioore.

* Swahili translation-Unapoanika unakausha.

* English translation-When you spread it in the sun, it becomes dry.

* Meaning-Whenever you hide your problems, nobody can help you. You have to be open, when you have a problem, you should tell it to others.

Oct., 2005

Oct 30, 2005

**From A Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwestern Kenya
Collected and explained by Emmanuel P. Chacha.**

Irikara ndioreekoba iriibu. * Swahili translation-Mkaa ndio hugeuka kuwa jivu.

* English translation-Burning charcoal is turned into ashes.

* Meaning-Every burning conflict eventually settles down and is forgotten. Peace results from conflict.

Ono asukwa negn-era hano amaaha kimwamu, nkong'osaare.

* Swahili translation-Aliyeshambuliwa na nyati akiona ng-ombe mweusi hukimbia.

* English translation-The one, who has been attacked by a buffalo, when he sees a black cow.

* Meaning-Someone perceives danger in the light of his past experience.

Ikuurate yamobaande etaakani woonde koraagera.

* Swahili translation-Kilio cha wengine hakimzuii mtu kula.

* English translation-The alarm from the other house does not prevent one from eating.

* Meaning-You are not always supposed to involve in your neighbor's problems. We do not need to involve in others' problems.

Temoonto agwisuba mweene hai. * Swahili translation-Kiongozi huwepe kwa sababu ya kuwepo watu.

* English translation-No one can perform a celebration by himself.

* Meaning-No one person can claim his success to be due to his own effort. There are other people who have contributed to his success.

Isire ya baana bandemwe nehakanwa bong'aini

* Swahili translation-Deni kati ya ndugu hulipana kwa akili

* English translation-A debt between children born by the same mother is paid in a clever way.

* Meaning-People of the same group should not make their differences known to the public. They solve their differences privately.

Oct 23, 2005

Three Thousand Six Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs

(From the Asante and Fante Language), J.G. Christaller, Copyrights and Permissions: Copyright

- * Times keep changing.
- * If the building of a nest were easy, would the little "apatipers" bird roost in the fork of a tree?
- * The "obereku" bird should be eaten hot.
- * If the goat says it will become a sheep, there will always be black spots on its body.
- * The goat says: "Nobody willingly walks to his own death."
- * The goat says: "What will come has already come."
- * The goat says: "Where there is blood, there is plenty of food."
- * The goat says: "They bought my mother, not I."
- * However high you lift the kid goat, you place it gently on the ground.
- * Even if the old woman has no teeth, her tiger nuts remain in her own bag.

Oct 16, 2005

Three Thousand Six Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs

(From the Asante and Fante Language), J.G. Christaller, Copyrights and Permissions: Copyright

- * The left hand washes the right and the right washes the left.
- * If you go too near your relatives, they will not respect you.
- * The soul of a rich man has no taboos.
- * People working on the slope of a mountain do not look at the buttocks of one another.
- * If the strong man has nothing else, he can at least command others.
- * One strong man does not catch another strong man.
- * If two selfish young men sit next to a pot of water, the water spills out on the ground.
- * If youthful pride were wealth, then every man would have had it in his lifetime.
- * What people get by hard work they don't get for their neighbors.
- * If an opportunity is not taken when it comes, it passes away.

Oct 09, 2005

Three Thousand Six Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs

(From the Asante and Fante Language), J.G. Christaller, Copyrights and Permissions: Copyright

- * There is no distinction among the common baskets made of palm branches.
- * He who seems to be for you may be working against you.
- * Little palm tree, stop crying, you child is the tall palm tree.
- * If the young palm tree wants to stay alive, it grows next to the odum tree.
- * One palm nut cannot be peeled twice.
- * The blood soup made of one palm nut is shared in little drops.
- * "I will get it because I can," one says with a reason (based on experience).
- * If you come near the river, you will hear the crab cough.
- * Even though the sound of the horn is not pleasant, it is still blown by a man's mouth.
- * You make a new arrow by comparing it to an old one.

Oct 02, 2005

Three Thousand Six Hundred Ghanaian Proverbs

(From the Asante and Fante Language)

J.G. Christaller Copyrights and Permissions: Copyright © 1990 Edwin Mellen Press. Used by per

- * The witch is going! The witch is going! but if you are not a witch you don't turn around to look.
- * The witch kills "he ate and he did not give me", but she does not kill, "he gave me too little."
- * It is not only one person who bathes in the witch's water.
- * If two proverbs are not similar, one is not used to explain the other.
- * When the palm nuts ripen, you carry half and I carry half.
- * It is only one bad palm tree that spoils the whole lot of palm wine.
- * The strength of the palm tree is in its branches.
- * The army of the palm tree is its branches.
- * Even though the peel of the palm nut has no pulpy substance in it, it is stripped off all the same (and th
- * The prickly branches of the palm tree do not show preference even to friends.
- * The grasshopper which is always near its mother eats the best food.

Sep., 2005

Sep 25, 2005

**Lugbara Proverbs from northwest Uganda and northeast Zaire.
Albert Dalfovo, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda. July 1995**

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 t

Aku ma ediafe agupi ni.

* Translation: The man is the central pole of the house. * Explanation: Traditional houses have a central

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 fa-ces it at the risk of his life. T

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 o

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

Jul., 2005

Jul 17, 2005

From Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwest

Kuria: Amaanche ngakaahea gatuke tegakweeba waabo hai.

* Swahili: Hata maji yakiungua (kuchemak) hayawezi kusahau kwao.

* 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

Kuria: Mosaacha oheene mewe akwibora iriraasi.

* Swahili: Mwanaume kwelikweli ndiye huzaa mtoto mjinga.

* English: A true person is the one who gives birth to a foolish child.

* Meaning: There is no guarantee that an honored man must beget responsible and honorable children.

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

* Swahili: Mtu mzuri utamjua mara moja mnapojikinga mahali na mbaya hivyo hivyo.

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

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

Kuria: Omogera ngomanyere hano gokogeera.

* Swahili: Mako yanajua mahali pa kuelea.

* English: Stream, it knows where to flow.

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

Kuria: Geteatuubere is gituuba nyinya.

* Swahili: Kisipofanana na mama kina fanana na baba.

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

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

Jul 10, 2005

From Collection of 104 Kuria Proverbs Northwestern Tanzania near Lake Victoria and Southwest

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Jul 03, 2005

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

Jun., 2005

Jun 26, 2005

From a Collection of 197 Sumbwa Proverbs. Getia/Kahama Districts around the southern part of

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

* English Translation: An adult should avoid any scandalous behavior in front of children, otherwise, he v

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

* Swahili Translation: Kufanya vitendo vya aibu mbele ya watoto hatakiwi kufanya kitendo cha siri mbele

* Swahili Meaning: Ni vigumu, ni ujuzi mgumu kwa mtoto kuvumbua kama mkubwa ni mwanadamu mwe

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.

* Swahili Translation: Inawezikana ulikuwa na ukarimu kwa mtu fulani, tena anakuingia. Ulimfanya vem

* Swahili Meaning: Umtazamie Mungu tu wakati unampokelea jirani. Si kila mmoja ana wawazo ya shuk

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.

* Swahili Translation: Kuna mambo mengine au vitabia vya mitaani ni vya kuviachia matebezini tu, siyo

* Swahili Meaning: Utaona mambo megii mitaani, lakini tafakari kila kitu usije ukavileta vilema nyumbani.

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.

* Swahili Translation: Mtu fukara sana hana mali yoyote ile nyumbani kwake.

* Swahili Meaning: Ni maskini wa mwisho kabisa.

Jun 19, 2005

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

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

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.

Jun 12, 2005

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 c

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.

Ca panga nala ove umunu wano ku ka ci patane.
Shun rebellion and contention with the great.

Jun 05, 2005

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

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May, 2005

May 29, 2005

**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.

Ca fa volusemo haco owanga (Haco osonde).
One taking pay without fuss quotes this proverb.

May 22, 2005

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

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

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 refre

Apa wa lila omoma ka yu ku momenapo.
Full consequences of a deed are not reaped at once.

Apa tua kekelele onjamba pa saile omoko (tua silepo okambeya).
Taking up unfinished business.

Asola ka nili, a tomba ukuaku takina. (ka samba u o takina), (ombungu yukuavayo).
Securing a better thing than was aimed at or expected.

May 15, 2005

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.

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 are watching.

Kɔdzo Dei be yele Blu fiam gakeyepe ñku le Ewegbe ñu.

Literal Translation: 'Kodzo Dei—the Paramount Chief of Peki—says that he is speaking Twi but he has no Twi'.

Moral Teaching: As in proverb above.

Bapa medoa kalê ha ða 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 battle.

Moral Teaching: 'A Cripple starting a war song means a person who claims certain qualities that he does not have'.

Úutɔtrɔ ñue wotrɔa yeðuðu ðo.

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 to change.

Moral Teaching: Adapt yourself and your conduct to changing circumstances and do not be unreasonable.

May 08, 2005

Ewe Proverbs

Ne tekpoðoe mekpɔ eðokui fe geme o la meðoa ñku o

Literal Translation: 'Tekpoðoe, which is a small roundish yam, always assesses its sprouting ability before
Moral Teaching: Know what you can do well and do just that and do not attempt what is beyond your po

Devi ðÇ ame tsitsi kuku efe ta ðe wòbuna ðe eme.

Literal Translation: 'The head of a child who wears an adult's hat is always all covered up to his face'. Th

Asi tu nyede metua agÇðÇ o.

Literal Translation: 'The hand can be used to pull out the tender branch of a date-palm, but cannot be us

Moral Teaching: Do not presume that because you can do certain things therefore you can do everything

Agbe nyañe (ðÇe) 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 un

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 s

May 01, 2005

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

Meaing: 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 be

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

Apr., 2005

Apr 17, 2005

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

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 c

Amazi masabano ntamara imvyiro

Translation: Water aid does not remove completely the dirt

Meaning: Working hard is more rewarding than depending on handouts

Apr 10, 2005

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

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 witamga 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

Apr 02, 2005

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)

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)

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 peoples mouth one catches

Meaning: Everything has a beginning

Mar., 2005

Mar 09, 2005

Sumbwa Proverbs from the Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in V
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

Kiswahili translation: Mgema mvua angetaka kuhkikisha urundi wake mbele ya watu; kwa bahati, mawingu

Kiswahili meaning: [many people] wanajivuna kuwa "wafundi" katika kijiji chao; wampetata bahati nasibu

English translation: The expert of rain, rainmaker, would like to prove his skillfulness by good luck, the cl

English meaning: This rainmaker didn't make any liturgy for getting a storm, but the rain comes up witho

Nkobe yalina hitale yagila nyani imepanda kwenye mwamba ajivune sasa

Kiswahili translation: tumbili akapata bahat ya kupanda katika mtu mrefu. Toka hapo, anaweza kujivuna

Kiswahili meaning: Amepata mali kwa ghafla na bila kusumbuka kwa bahati. Angalia namna gani sasa a

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

English meaning: Those who get good luck and huge wealth in no time, quickly change character and w

Kubikila mti mwikungi kusanga gwa katiwe kutunza mti porini utaukuta umekatwa

Kiswahili translation: Umepata bahati ya kuokota kitu cha thamani, ukidhani ya kwamba hakuna mwenye

Kiswahili meaning: Usidhani kama ni wewe tu mwenye kutafuta faida; usipoamka mapema utatanguliwa

English translation: You can have found a beautiful object which seems ownerless; you dream that it will

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

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

Kiswahili translation: Mgonjwa hajiwezi kwa kazi yoyote kwa sababu yupo kitandani, lakini mvivu taki ku

Kiswahili meaning: Mgonjwa na mvivu ni tofauti kubwa. Wa kwanza ni maskini kabisa, wa pili ni mwizi m

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

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

Mar 20, 2005

Sumbwa Proverbs from the Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in V

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Mwanza, Tanzania

April 1999

Kwimbila nzibe kula mimbo kuimbia kiziwi ni kumaliza wimbo

Kiswahili Translation: Unapotaribu kuongea na mtukutu, na mtu asiye na pumziko, unapoteza mate yako

Kiswahili Meaning: Mtu wa nidhamu maalum hawezi kulewa utendaji. Utendaji umegeuka kuwa sumu kw

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

English Meaning: A superactive person is not so easy to be addressed. His turbulence disturbs his mind

Habukuru habwilindilo uzeeni ni sehemu

Kiswahili Translation: Kila mtu anapofika umri wa kukoma, ana akili ya mtu mzima kama watu wa makam

Kiswahili Meaning: Wazee wanafurahi kuwa pamoja na kugawanya mawazo yao ya ujuzi na wa utaratib

English Translation: When you get old, it is a good time for mutual understanding, your maturity is appre

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

Minso gatari ne luvumba macho hayana mpaka

Kiswahili Translation: Macho huangalia hadi mbali zaidi ambako mwili mzima haijafika

Kiswahili Meaning: Macho, yaani skili inakutangulia katika kutia mpango wa kazi, mpango wa mradi, ing

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 more quickly than your wh

Kkusionfya kutani kulumanga kuchovya siyo kula bila mboga

Kiswahili Translation: Kuchovya tu katiki mchuzi ingawa mama hakuwa na mboga wa kukutolea, usinun

Kiswahili Meaning: Usimahurutishe maskini akikutolea zawadi ndogo, mefanya hivi kwa moyo mkarimu.

English Translation: To soak the mouthful in the sauce even though there is no steak, it is not too bad. Y

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

Mar 13, 2005

Sumbwa Proverbs from the Geita/Kahama Districts around the southern part of Lake Victoria in V

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P.O. Box 76

Mwanza, Tanzania

April 1999

Kisumbwa: Nkoso ikulyanga ikufulilizya panya huuma huku akipuliza

Kiswahili translation: Mtu anaweza akawa rafiki yako, kumbe ni munafiki kwako. Anapumbaza akifiria ak

Kiswahili meaning: Uwachague warafiki yako vema, wengine wanaiga mapendo, ingawa wanachunguza

English translation: Some people want to be among your best friends, but they are hypocrites, they med

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

Kisumbwa: Kuzya bwigili kwenda jumla kama ngili. Kiswahili translation: Mtu anaweza kuwaacha wenza

Kiswahili meaning: Nidhamu ya msingi ni kushukuru. Mwenye nyumba aliyekualika kwa mapendo. Wew

English translation: They are people who get invitation, but they haven't the nuptial robe (politeness) the

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

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

Kiswahili meaning: Umwogope mtu huyu asiye na msimamo mzuri, angeweza kukuvuruga, hata kukuvu

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.

Mar 09, 2005

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

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

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 a

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

Feb, 2005

Feb 27, 2005

Lugbara Proverbs (Uganda)

Compiled by Albert Dalfovo and John S. Mbiti (1996)

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

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

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

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

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 o

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

Feb 20, 2005

Proverbs in the Ewe Language (Ghana, West Africa)

Vi dzro nu medzroa golo pe azi o. Literal Translation: 'A beggar can beg for certain things but cannot be

Ɖevi ka akple gā mekaa nya gā o.

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

Explanation: A child can handle easy matters but cannot handle serious ones because his experience is

Moral Teaching: Do not be overambitious..

Ɖadi vi aƒi 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 overesti

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 befo

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

Jan, 2005

Jan 30, 2005

Swahili Proverbs from East Africa compiled by Leonidas Kalugila, Scandanivian Institute of Afric

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

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).

Jan 23, 2005

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

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

Agbonyila medÇa akÇIçe 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 his duty'.

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 favor.

KuviatÇ meñIÇa mÇ to o.
Literal Translation: 'A lazy man does not make a farm close to the footpath'. (if he does so he will be advised to move it).
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)

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

Jan 16, 2005

Bassa (Liberian) Proverbs and Biblical Communication compiled and explained by Abba G. Karn

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 uncon

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 ma

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

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

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

Jan 09, 2005

Proverbs in the Ga or Accra language (Ghana). These are taken from a collection compiled by Ri

Alomte efon miau bo.
The cat does not cease to cry " meau."

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.

Jan 03, 2005

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

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 irahuhuma 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.

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.