

**Red Sea University**

**جامعة البحر الاحمر**

**Beja Cultural Studies Center**

**مركز دراسات الثقافة البجاوية**



**Nakash Mitaal Bidhaawyeetiib**

**(I)**

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## **Nakash Mitaal Bidhaawyeetiib (I)**

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## الترجمة العربية

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السالف

## Udaba

Oon uktaabi hanka tubdhaawyeeti  
bhalyeet kitaabaawa giraayaawa hooy  
laamamiini kitaab fir'aaba. Beenaay  
iharfaawa tuhay'a tuhaay itkatiibneetwa  
tuhaay kwinhameeneetwa ihiin. Ooktaab  
oon nakashooya mitaalwa habayt  
gaatwa hooy iheeni kitaabu.  
Tubdhaawyeetiit kitaabaawa giraayaawa  
suur agriyaan uudehay daayiib tugraaya  
ba'iktiinaan ba'isn'ikwna miyaadiib  
daamaabu. Tehabayaawwa ut'ariikhwa  
eenda y'eegirmaayeet famaawa malya  
ikatib kaabaa madaa agriyeen kaaba  
akoo.

Oon uktaabiib shagaamaa neenhoob  
liibaabaab mitaal dehoon hadiidaana  
neeniit eemtaal ihadiidyaaneeb  
sajjalnaayt niktibaayt malya tuktaabaatiib  
ishbuubneet hay'aatiida nid'i  
(tuktaabaatiit alaamaawa tijumlaati  
migwmidwa ibhalyeet amoorarmooywa).

Ar'ii tu'arabyeetiidehaaywa  
tu'ingliiseetiidehaaywa tarjamna.

Shawaaytwa shibu gin'ad'oowwa  
dehookna ikatyeena s'ayaamnay.

Umdhhanookna.

Hummad Taalib  
Bar'uut  
2/2010



# Ushawaw W'akaasha

Malu shawaw gaalka dhiwaab iibriin  
iifiin. Uungaal hadareebuu ishawweeb  
uuraaw akishu. Uun uhadari ooraaw,  
ushawawuuh sookiitiib giigyhoob y'ar  
dehaay iidir, ooreew dehaay iishiwwawii;  
teeya dehaay iiniyyi. Oon arwaanaka  
baraah dehaay ishtinhineet tehiitka  
dehaay faaysi.





Dibluuna aree reewikaabuu, nif'u  
iibrikaabu, akoo, imshibib, naat dehaay  
daayi. Tuuyiin dhibtiyihoo n'eet  
ishdhaneeb biikaayeeb iishbib.  
Shidhhanaab akayee rhiyeek, "Diraar  
ibari", iidaat ushti naayi. Shidhhanaab  
baakaay rhiyeek, "Amsi diwaabu, diraar  
kiibaru", iidaat, tutakattooh dehaay  
ujaasiit, bashikwt m'ari istuub.

Oond'a tudunya tuknaatiib diimheet  
kitehaay akoo, oon uhadari uunf'uuh  
iinkwis. Ar'i doorka shalikkaab iikti. Been  
w'akaasha haysakaabka iikti. Weeree  
uhadari uudraar gallabi. Ushawawooh  
s'ayaamyhoob, ushawawuuh naatii  
kanakamya.

W'akaashaawwa tutakatuhuwwa teemluk  
tehajari iidneet, tisuur ihiint, t'iraagi na d'a  
iyadneetwa gilatwa shaawwa  
imashakeeb

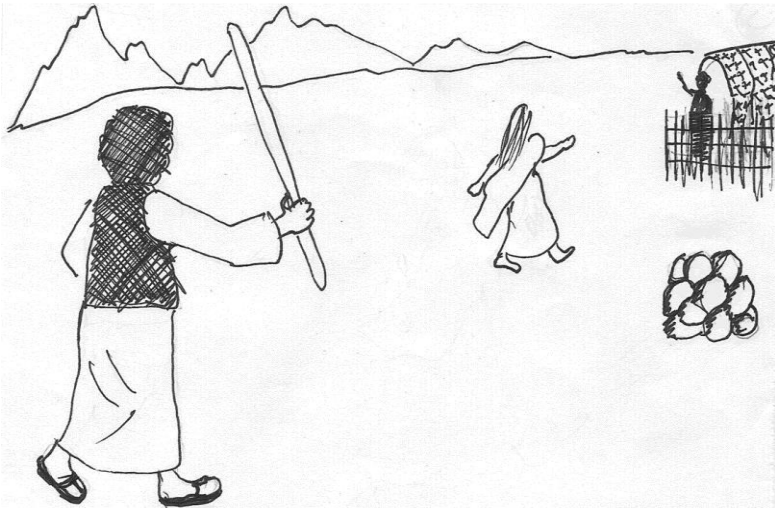


daasaabaa, naat baabariin it'ina.  
Baraah karhiyaanhoon iidneebka hooy  
gabiin, oodoor ooraaw imashak shuumsiin.  
Aarbahan shikwanaayt tuut tuuna iraweeb  
baraamti. Gilatwa naat iibriineet toona  
aan ishawawaah iktiiniin. Raatiineek iyaaw

biidiineet toona iktiiniin, tukashiitooh  
iktiinnaayt.

Amseenook uutak uhadareewwa  
tutakatuhuwwa habaroon id'iin. Tutakat  
yaktaayt "Yhaa uun baruukwa aniiwwa  
nimuuthith'a, th'a hagilaheebaa, gida  
abdh'ashaheebaa, dhaabeetiit ani  
dehaay shuumat. Naat ibariineek, gee  
gwhartii hooy iyaay baadyeek, weet hay'a  
kitehaayay," tini. "Winneet daayiitu," iniit,  
yhafit koolay ifr'a iyyhaayt ith'a udawlhu  
ikt'ihoo, gamtaayt farta. Ishawaw marii  
dhaabtaneeb oodoo, oon ugeesooh,  
away igid abdh'ashiyaa, ar'ii dhaabya.  
Digwaagwa ahaat takatu akoo, baruuhan  
aree abika kiidii, hashak ubdhaay gaw

uw'akaashaaynaay tini. Uutak ukoolayooh

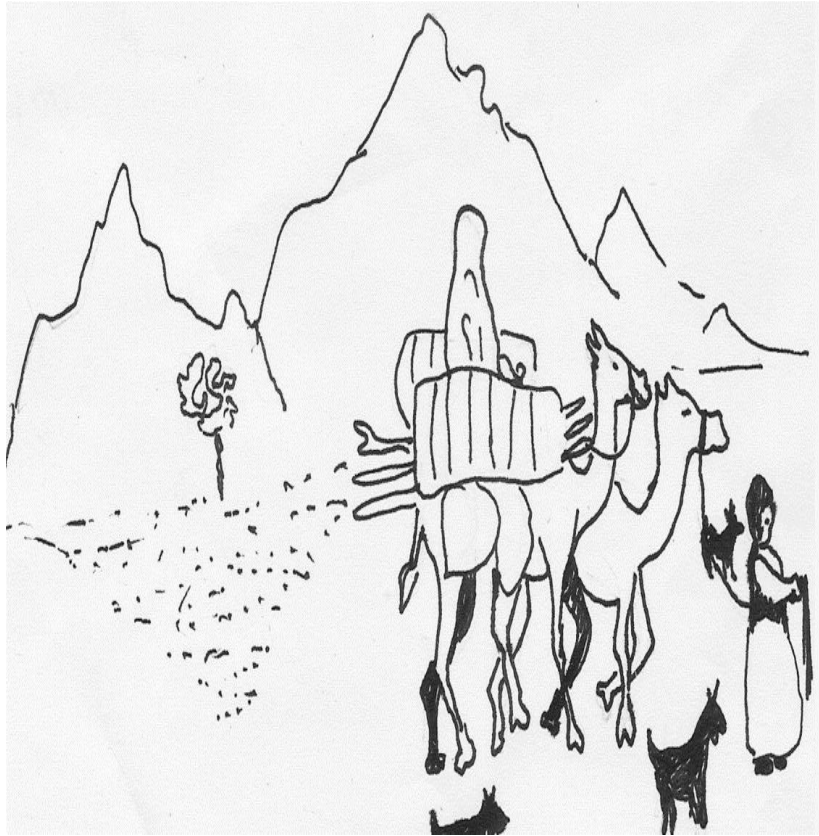


yhaayt liwwaawyanhoob imashak  
shuumta. "Ootak habiinaheeb, uutak  
idaarheeb indihookna, ootak  
habiinaheeb," tini. Oond'a, "Yhaa tutakat  
amhagaala, tutakat amhagaala, tutakat  
hinee hasabeeb teefeet takattuuy,  
amhagaala," eenhoob, liwwawaawya.

Tutakat w'akaashaawwa tutakatuhuwwa  
baryooh ign'aayhina id'iinhoob, tingilat  
timru. Daat hooy tid'eet tinaw, haay  
y'akirnaa, tiwriyeet tigamhoob, neewtiit  
massaltaayt, "Ugirgirooy oor, ugirgirooy  
oor, ugirgirooy oor," tini. Tingilat akraata  
miyaadiib tihyaayt. Baruuhan,  
"Mashakeebka mashaadh hindiit oor,  
mashakeebka mashaadh hindiit oor" ini,  
naat hindiib harwiiti haay firiki miyaadiib.  
Hindiib timruuyt, haay tifikraayt, naat daayi  
haddiina haay giigtiyi t'iyaayt timruyhoob,  
daat kwidhta. "Udaat anuuy oor, udaat  
anuuy oor," tini. Aan aree neewsamiineeb  
hiisiin akoo, "Unabiida salliiyaana,  
uhaafookna baaraamna, bak  
baasakaana!" iidna. Oond'a baruu yak

aayt, “Ulibbiyeet oor ulibbiyeet oor,”  
ilibbiyook d’iyi , miyaad ihiriw. Oond’a  
ilibbiyeeb tid’iyeeb oodoor, tumifr’a  
tutitfir’eet tigam. Tusuuli dabaaytii titfir’eek  
rhini iidna akoo, “Usiib anuuy oor, usiib  
anuuy oor,” tini, kak atfar’i miyaadiib.  
Oond’a “Ubalaayt oor, ubalaayt oor” ini  
ubala ar’iisiisay asi abkiiti fir’ayi miyaadiib.  
Baruuh anree hangaagamii, “Tutakat  
soodirnaheeb, afrayt takatuuy  
soodirnaheeb” iid akoo, aan hooy bariin.  
Batuuh ubala t’as t’abikaayt tifdin  
dhaabta. Baruuh giigtiyeet toona  
rhiyanhoob, biiryhayna inniit daayi kaabka  
irgas. Batuuh giigtaayt sagi mhiinaan  
imuukikinneet abaatiib tehagit.

Oond'a gwidaana d'a eeraw  
tisnikwisna, bareeh een anf'atiit w'akaasha  
iibriyeet tunaatiib hooy yheen. Oond'a  
tu'abaatiib tamilyaani gabyaan.  
“W'agyaay hinin oon ootak suur  
saknaneenaatiika ushti beerni” eeniit,  
y'ushni dehayuuh ihiini mhiiniida beeryaan.  
Gwirhaab hadrat iribna.  
Amaar ikee samaar iki.





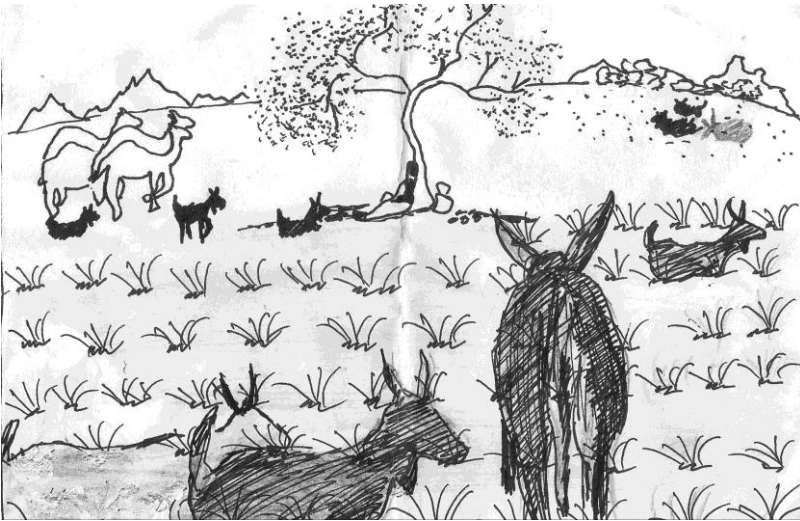
# Umingaay

*"Umingaay ukaraayhan ribaabu."*

Sh'iya adima

Door mish'ari malu ammarriyaa  
gawiib wanasiin, hijkiin. Gaalhoob  
baraamwa siifwa naat daata, biray d'aal  
ihiinaayt. Kilaayt oon ubaraami raabiib  
eetaayt bareeyooh ugadam tis'ihooB,  
uungaal ishbibt, "Yaa diinka yaa  
Mhummad, tooklaay ubaraam indiir,  
dhibeetiit ubaraamiib, biiree dhibeetiit,  
tiyaayi akoo, hini gadam tis'a," iniit ishbib.  
Uuraaw tooklaay hantaasaa innihoob,  
ubraam baabaay miyaadiib, tuuklaay  
umhiinooh tidh'a. Hantaayat tirib.  
Tirbihoob, uuraaw, "Oot tuklaaytiika, uun

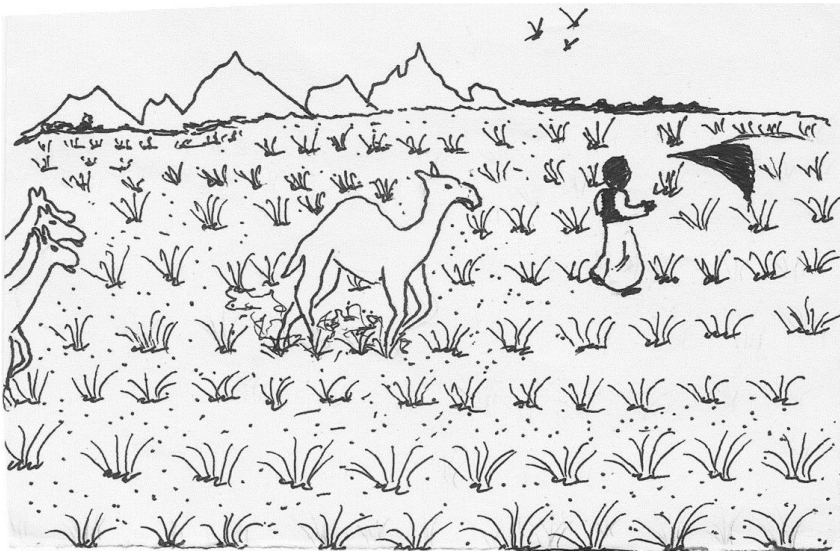
ani akrakaat hadraabu,” ini. Uuraaw,  
“Hindee gwibyaan! Naat hay’aatii akra  
kaat hadraabwaa?” inyihoob, uuraaw een  
eemtaal hadiidya.



“Aywalla biri daayaayt, awliib  
n'awillaayt, oon w'atmuuriib haayee, oon  
w'atmuuriib gwida reewwa gwida  
dehaywa ammarriyaabaayt, fajirka

dirrarimni. Uureew gabaata ukwraayiib.  
Oond'a aan irawi yiintook bak in'uni  
dirimyaan. Ani mingaayyu oon as  
dirmanaayt, teekam bak as hayyanan.  
Gadh'ahan yaksaab kaakee, gaal koolay  
nuun naat baabari, middaat asni.  
Gaalhoob eet teekam jhaatiidehaayka  
dibildiblee jhaatiidehaay ka door  
dibildiblee duudee rhan. Tuuna na naatu  
anniit, ukoolay ayyhaayt abaay dhaaban.  
Timmiima win angalooy, hasi, teekam  
shooki isniheeb. "Tshoo, tshoo, tshoo," aniit,  
abaay dhaabanhoob, kib ugirma toot  
tubreetiib y'abikt iragada ishaawwiit  
isuuriib, imkak ingadt inu' ishbibheeb.  
Finaayda imarhoob oon ukoolay ayyhaayt  
oon um'agi ath'a. Ath'uhoo baruuh

isnaafi yhafitteheeb, ukoolay been  
oomhiin dhibya. Lagaagnaayt dehu iki.  
Oond'a weet jha iibyeet kitehaay akoo,  
teet teekam abaay aklas. Teekam  
shuuman ahiyeek, teekam dariidaka door  
dehu duudisya.



Taakam madaryooda ingadnihoob,  
ugirma oongaalnaayii shoomant uraawii  
afr'a, baruuh hooy halib halbee, aneeb  
hooy harwee. Bak mishu as dhaaban.  
Gayyee oomhiin udayyaranyeeb  
idaarheeb indiyay diyaab akayee  
middaat gidehu abi. Baruuh tikamteeb  
inawteheeb, nakamyanihoob gedehu  
bayee rhiyaheeb. Een igeesoo iyadeeyu  
daaya. Ar'i doorka dawilkaayu iki. Oon  
allaayook ufidlii, bidhdhigiil deela karaay  
rigwaab iikityeeb rhan, baruuh bhuuda  
sakyaay ikitmeeyu door. Aflaa,  
winnikaabka dhaaban, oon udeela marii  
yayaksamna. Allaayyook ufidlii hanka  
aktimt, hooy faran. Baruuh oon udeela

uyafiib ingadt oon ugirmooh, tuubaabu,  
oon udeelaay yafiib y'abik.

Udeelaay timmiimaa wint asala,  
aneeb gidehu tihi. Ookaam rhitanhoob  
hantaata, aneeb uknaayu tin'a titirteheeb  
kehiisiisu hasamtaayt, oon ooyaf  
wu'ukaamiib t'abik. Uukaam ugirmaayooh  
y'as y'abikt, bitsamyaayt isikw ifr'a.

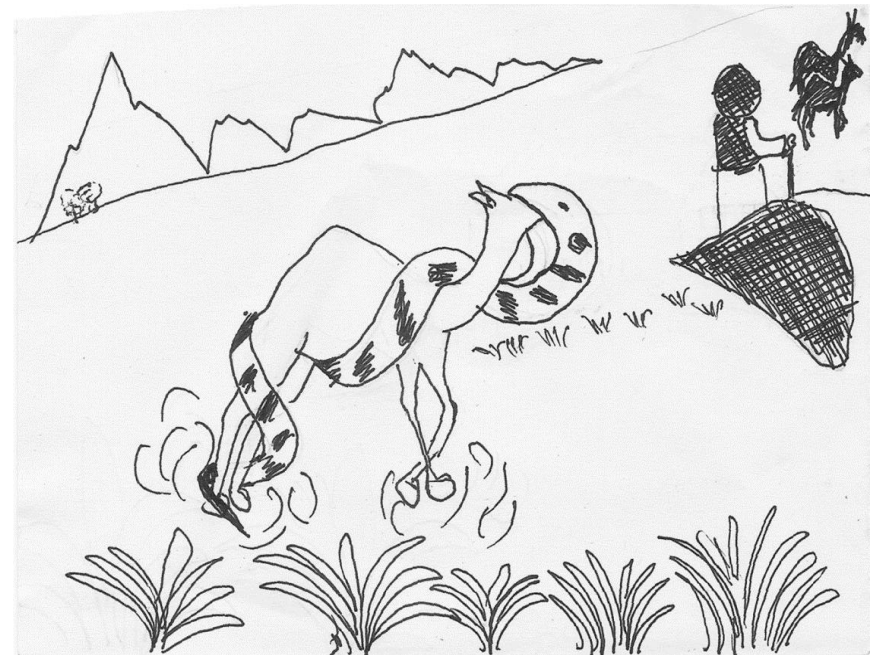
Haatay tu'asala aflaa hooy timhallaabi  
titabt, baruuh rigasee giigsat tirib.

Dhibistaayt, titwiitka oobooy duugta. Ani  
gee hamdi lilla aniit bak yakan.

Ukoolayoowa tikamteewwa abi,  
tu'asalaawa barhuwwa akwaasiit. Aflaay,  
umingaay ukaraayhan ribaabu akoo  
ugeesu tikamti ashaawwawii, ukoolayu

yaksan, iraweeyoodehaaywa uudehay  
iifiineeb oomhiinwa abaay aklas," ini.

Bak t'iiteet hadiid hadiidya. Aanhan  
gwirhaaba tuklaaytiit gwidaatu nuun.



## Tugdh'atiit Kina

Tak, miskiin tak, hattaabi iifi. Meekii eerba  
beetiitka, hindiyeesh ihitbaatka diraarooh  
hooy ihirow. Halaal dhadhbi akoo,  
dehayuuh takat ihiiniit id'urt oot hooy imru.  
Tu'oor adaart oot akayee tuundi  
dinyaatamta.





Tutakat hooy tiyanhoob, udehayuuh  
“Uutak daayi taku, daayi faay faaysaabu”  
eeniit, weet takat ihiin. Tuuraaw daayiit  
geeb akayee, amrashaadee, tu'oor  
dehaay rishdee, tuukna tifiiraat oot ha'ati.  
Oond'a batuuh oot timiireeb oodoor,  
tehaniinaawwa tudaayiinaay tu'oor  
tusuurkinaatiida tiibriyeet tu'ootooh  
tutuknaatiinaatiida beerti. Tu'oor  
turaawtiika t'ootyuhuda tehiiskaat tiikti.  
Tum'ari turabakaat tiyiw. Uhalak  
udaayikaab tistuuk. Oodehaay b'astii  
tu'ootooh tutuknaatiit. Tu'oor tusuurkina  
ushanha tidi', tum'ariitiib ukalawa  
kagabistaa, um'akwaraay b'asti. Tu'oor  
ubaaba tutakatiib biimmarraay tiidaayt

kasoota. Tutakat aree t'oor ubaaba dehu  
sooyat eetni tiidi eetehak tiibri.

Oot tuhay'aatiib haayee. B'eeb  
eegrimt takat haadgwiit tutakatiida  
eeti. Tutakat angwarrhaatuuyt  
tuhaadgwiitiida hadiidti "Tuun ani toot  
tu'oor anfiraneek, ushanha daayat tirbeek,  
kak awari?", tini. Tuhaadgwi yaktaayt,  
"Been umhiinaan tiheet tutakat, uudehay  
biibaayneet sitoobi, dehaay lingwuumii  
tuuknahan naat gaat tim'ariyay" tini. Takat  
saariit sagi mhiin tiifiit, uudehay iriikwneet,  
biibaayneet tihi akoo, beet tusaariitiida  
t'oor lingwuuyiin. Shaliklooya yam iyiwnaat  
"Bayiiti urabi utiniiweeyook haay m'ayi",  
iidna. T'oor eeyam yakistiyaat tiidif.

Oond'a baya sakee, udarabiib adaru hindi  
daawriirooy isiinaat, "Aana kwaatu uun ani  
yiweebuuy uradamyu yam thakwsii," iid.  
T'oor dehaay hannanamtiyaat uradamiib  
yam thakwistiyhoob, "Shaalla adaroot oor  
daawriilooyt tikatii, oon aniit", iidehoob,



adaroot tiikti. Oond'a oon  
hasamtiyaat suur bayee, weer hindi eela

isiinaat, “Anaa kwaatu, yiweebuuy  
dibluuna uradamyu thakwsii,” iid. Dehaay  
hannanamtiyaat uradamiib thakwistiyeeb  
oodoor, dehaay afrhiyaat uhindi, “Shalla  
oon aniit iliilyaak wa, tikwreetaak wa  
in’afaak wa eelaameen,” iid. Gaalhoob  
ililiwwa taakwreewwa aan’afwa  
eelaamiin. Oond’a oon hasamtiyaat suur  
bayee, weer hindi hadal, gwimadt  
l’ingwooyaati isiinaat, een igeesoo, “Anaa  
kwaatu yiweet ahaatootuuy yam  
uradamyu thakwsii,” iid. Hooy  
thakwistiyeeb oodoor, “Shaalla  
tehamootaak wa iliilyeeyook umhiinaan  
uhadalwa uyafuukwa ihadaaliin,oon aniit,”  
iid. Aanhan ihidiilnaa, tehamu igwmidiin.

Oond'a tu'oor tusaariitiida eetyhoob,  
tusaari oond'a haay tiktiini, uut tu'oor  
daayiit oor tiiktiyeet toona. Tusaari tubeeti  
sakti een ihindi kastee tijhaateeb d'iyaa  
haay tiktiini akoo, uhaalati udehaay eeyi  
daayiib iiktiyeeb biikaayeeb  
tiktiini.



Oond'a tusaari, "Yhee eetaneek  
daayiib saktaay. Tuun ani bak iha mhiin  
beetiit halaagaayt abariit, yharbab eeyi

andiyay, oogaw kad'iyyii, eeklay daarii,  
ooreew haaridi y'anyeeb hadiit," tiniit  
ti'ush giigta. T'oor ooreew gabistaa, eeklay  
tamistaa, ihlaka tishaagwidh tishnas.  
Oogaw gibil tikwaasiit tehagtehoob,  
tusaari wineet hooy timdhadhaayt, "Tuun  
batuuk dayiit ootuuy, daayiit miitaatiituuy,"  
tini. Hariiri halakaawa daawriit gidh'aawa  
tistook, diimm'araab shallaloota  
(tehaakwir). Oond'a, "Eendhook bayii  
shaalla kitingwarrhayi. Naatiida  
tishtanhiyeek m'ayyheeb," tiniit tisiisarha.  
Tu'oor afrhaat akayee umaragwyuhuda  
eeti.

Tunduura batooh tuhay'a toonaatiib  
haayee rhitanhoob, "Anihan tu'ootu  
astuub andi," tiniit tu'ootooh bayi tini.

Tu'oor udarbiib yhindi isuur tooraaw isniin,  
isniiniit yam araatyaanhoob gw'asat tirib.  
Raatyaabka tehabu. "Kak iheen hindiya,  
aree bhaliyeenhook, eekna habaahoon",  
tini. Hindika usadayooh dehaay miniimya.  
Mhay kooyee yhindi tehabyeek gwaraart  
tiki. W'eera, "Eeraat tikatii itarabaak," inii,  
w'adaru, "Adaroomeen shaalla itarabaak  
aaraw," inii, uhadal, "Itarabaak aaraw  
shaalla ihadaaliin," ini. Gwaraart akayee  
tusaariitiida eetanhoob, "Kisi daayiit  
baakaayt oor eetaheeb," tiniit, turaawti  
habir dehaay tid'i. Tusaari yaktaayt  
t'ootiida, "Bak diffiit eeyihook andiyay, oon  
urabi kad'iyyii, naatka hashishi," tiniit, t'ush  
giigta.

Eetanhoob naatka ajaaj kwaasaa,  
ooreew haardaa eeklay daaraa, teeda  
kad'aa, naatka, gadab dehaay dhibsaa  
tisni.



Tusaari tehasaayt, "Uun batuuk  
amaagt ootuuy, shaalla kalibaabtaay,"  
tiniit, shakiidhtaay tifr'at, tishik tid'i. Uumhiin



uhadal hadal booy ha'iya, w'adaru  
adarooob ha'iyaa, w'eera eeraab ha'iya.  
Garaabt akayee tundeetiida eeta.

Whaashiida had'a umalik ooriitooh  
sid'urooytiib hadiidi akoo, "Udehayay  
kassaak dehu ammarraraayna," iid.  
Udehay immirriineeb oodoor, t'oor  
tudaayiit umalki hatay hooy gw'iineeb  
udirkwii gadamii hasamee, tugdh'tuu  
udirkwiiib dhibti. Hafiiteeti tehiglaat eeyam  
hoogti. Umalik, "Takat ooru aniiweet  
aharriiw," diya diyee, hanka uhataayooh  
gw'asyeena iimkiraat iyameeda iitrihoob,  
whataay eeyam iirib. Tutehabi igamnhooob,  
eeyam ishbibna. Y'utiina hooy rhiyaaniit  
ifr'ana. Gidh'at akayee imruun. Umalik,  
"Oot tugdh'tiit kina w'ooru ayaaw andi

tikatiitka," ini. Oond'a t'oor tunduura  
biiryhayna tinniit haay giigta. Umalikwa  
ikajarihiwwa inawnhoob igawaayeeb  
toogdh'a tumalya yhariwna. Toogdh'a  
tu'iibriineet ti'arti ragadaayeeb id'inaatka  
haddaaytooh tiiktiyeetka ibikna. Tu'ooti  
gaw iktimnhoob kilaaywa takatwa waliikiin  
imaasiwna. Tutakat "Kal, kal," tiid, uuklaay,  
"Tugdh'atiit kina oon oomhiin tiha,  
tugdh'atiit kina udeelaay tiha,"iid. Tusaari  
linguuyaa, een y'adim diya diyaatuuyt.  
Ikajar t'oor udeelaay imruniit, isikwni ifr'aniit  
umalik w'oorooh isd'ur. Ubaaba miskiin tak  
akayee dikwkwan ihiin, gawaab ihiin,  
gabyaay iyyhee. Tu'ootyooh sabbii,  
libaabyaan, gwirhaab hadrat iribna.  
Amaar ikee, samaar iki.



## Ooslif

Uuslif uushbu riyaa yiini utirbuuh dhiw  
areetaayt.

Oobja baakaay sanaab yharweek,  
tehaadi tooraaw imooyaay.

Imeennaawweek, tehassay oodaay mhiinka  
tiilaal ifitkeek,  
Ishagw Bijaab baakaay tooshbu kwooniib  
riyaayiib.

Yhayidaayt tusanaayeetoo daaya,  
Oobjaayt diwaateeb.  
Dalhiibwa, alyaat sanaayeewwa, fayag  
imru mithaathaayt.

Ihiilaa baathkaak eenda magnaayt  
atweeryee,  
Whabniib andhiwaayaab eettaar iibriin  
Bijaawi.

Kwaasti biidy'eeek lamaadooh, fajariib  
bi'ariikeek,

Shawwiida shiboot nibari tuhassay aabreet  
daboonu.

Shawwiida shiboot nibari tuhassay aabreet  
daboonu.

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## **Introduction to the English translation**

The Beja Cultural Studies Center (BCSC) of the Red Sea University is delighted to offer the first in an upcoming series of books designed to help those newly literate in Bidhaawyeet to practice their skill of reading. Under the program of “Ibhalyeek Kitibna” “Write Your Language” the BCSC has produced a primer which teaches all of the sounds of the Bidhaawyeet alphabet. This present book of Bidhaawyeet short stories provides the transitional material needed to prepare Bidhaawyeet readers to read more complicated material in Bidhaawyeet.

One of the aims of the BCSC is to record, transcribe and make available to the public in the original Bidhaawyeet language, the history, poetry, songs, stories, etc. as told by the elders of the various Beja tribes. This book of short stories is designed to prepare readers who can easily read, appreciate and be able to comment on those accounts.

To produce this book, various “labiiba”, those well known to be versed in the art of poetry and story telling, were asked to think about and create short stories that could be used in this first Bidhaawyeet reader. The stories were told orally and recorded, then transcribed and edited in this first attempt at establishing writing conventions for the Bidhaawyeet language in Sudan, i.e. punctuation, sentence length, etc. The entire process was guided by the overriding question: What will be most beneficial for a newly literate reader of Bidhaawyeet? The resulting stories were then



translated into Arabic and English using modern translation theory which emphasizes meaning over form.

The themes of these short stories affirm the values esteemed by the Beja culture. Two of the stories (The Stingy Neighbor and The House of Generosity) express the Beja value of generosity. Another value, that of the necessity of community life, is the central theme of the story “The Loner”. The account entitled “The Owner of the Shoe” is a fantasy reminiscent of Cinderella that portrays the age old struggle between good and evil, a theme found in most, if not all cultures of the world.

We hope that you enjoy these stories and look forward to more books in the Bidhaawyeet language.

Jeanette Swackhamer  
February 2010  
Port Sudan, Sudan



# The Stingy Neighbour

There were two neighbours. Each one had a family. One of the neighbours was generous and the other one was stingy. The generous one, when his neighbour went on a trip to the market, would serve the night meal to his neighbour's children. He would gather together his animals for the night, and would milk the goats for him. He would do his duty toward that family and take care of everything else they needed. The generous one also helped his neighbour by giving him things because he had more money and more animals than his poorer neighbour. When the sun set, he would look to see if his neighbour had lit a fire or not. If he saw that his neighbour had lit a fire, he would say to himself, "He has had supper," and would go to bed. And if he saw that his neighbour had not lit a fire, he would know that his neighbour had had no supper and he would make his wife cook supper and take it to them.

Now there is nothing stable in this life, and so the money of the generous one decreased. Over time it became less. The stingy man became better than he. This continued until it became difficult for the generous one to find something to eat. He hoped that his neighbour would help him, but his neighbour wouldn't do anything for him. The stingy one and his wife had a kind of date called "tehajari" that was found in old times (today we call them Iraqi dates) and they also had a store of dried meat. They had mixed these two items together and stored them under the big bed. They pretended as if they didn't have anything. When they

thought that their neighbours weren't looking, they would eat until they were full. Otherwise they keep it under the big bed. Because the air in the hills is pure, their neighbours smelled this food and knew that the other ones had stored meat and other things. They also knew they would not give them anything even if they asked them because they knew how stingy they were.

One day the generous man and his wife made a plan. The woman began by saying, "You and I, let's quarrel. Pretend that you are trying to hit me with a stick, and pretend that you are trying to hit me with stones. I will run and enter their house. If they have anything, there is no way for us to have some of it except for stealing from them," she said. He said, "This is a great plan," and quickly grabbed a stick and hit the ground hard just near her. She jumped and screamed and when she ran towards her neighbour he immediately threw a stone almost hitting her and then ran after her. (She was a very fast woman and he really didn't want to catch her.) She entered the house of the stingy one. While the husband, with his stick in hand was going round and around the house, she went under the big bed. She shouted, "Protect me from this man. The man is going to kill me, protect me from him." So they neighbours said, "Leave this woman alone, leave this woman alone. She is under our protection. Leave her alone." The husband kept going around and around the house. While the stingy man and his wife were busy with the husband, the woman found the meat but she couldn't find any pot to put it in and the food was stuck together in a hard mass. When she didn't know what to do, she pretended to cuss out her husband and said, "You son of the

stuck together one, you son of the stuck together one,” meaning that the food was stuck fast. He also shouted, “You daughter of the split piece of wood found underneath each big bed, you daughter of the split piece of wood found underneath each big bed,” meaning find something like a piece of wood and break the food apart with it. She found a piece of wood and broke the food apart and got a heap of it together but she couldn’t find a pot to put it in. She cussed again at him, “You son of the one who has no pot, you the son of the one who has no pot.” The others thought that they were cussing at each other, therefore they shouted, “Pray to the prophet. Don’t be angry and don’t do this.” And now he cussed back at her, “You daughter of the lap, you daughter of the lap,” meaning put some of the food in the cloth of your lap. After she had put some in the cloth of her lap, she did not know how to get out. If she went out by the front mat, they would see her. So she shouted, “You son of the one who has no way, you son of the one who has no way,” meaning, how can I get out. And now he shouted back, “You daughter of the back mat, you daughter of the back mat.” He said this meaning that she should raise up the back mat and go out that way. He said all of this while acting very agitated and saying, “Let me kill this woman because she is a bad woman. Let me kill her.” While they were holding him back from her, she raised the back mat and ran. He saw her running away but didn’t want them to see her so he struggled all the more. She left and waited for him in a place far away in a dry stream bed that they both knew about.

Now they had taken a large portion of the food from their neighbour which was a loss for their neighbour but

was a gain for them. They took from what the stingy neighbour had stored. And now in the dry stream bed, they ate until they were full and said, “We should move away from this man. No matter what we have done before, we should move away from this man.” They said this and then moved to a place where their relatives lived. After that, they had no problems and lived happily ever after. The End.

Cultural Note: Traditional Beja houses are called “bidhaay gaw”, literally “house of mats”. They are tent-like structures made of mats woven from palm fronds. A short stick, which holds up a mat, serves as the entrance. Normally people only go in and out of the tent by that entrance. Half of the interior of the tent is taken up by a large bed called “misteha” or “imb’aji” which stands about two feet off the ground. The part under the bed is called “imashak” and serves as a storage area. Since the bed is made of wood, there are often pieces that split off and fall under the bed.

# The Loner

*“Being alone is shunned, even by hyenas.” (Beja proverb)*

Once two camel herders met together in a house and were chatting. Suddenly, there was a wind and it started to sprinkle because there were signs of rain. At that time, a bird came and perched near them to escape the wind. One of them looked at it and said, “Oh Mohammad’s religion. This bird has come to sit here with us because if it tries to fly in this wind, the wind will cause it to fall and it will die.” The other camel herder tried to shoo the bird away, but it stayed where it was so as not to go back out into the wind. It stayed put. When it refused to move the other one said, “Once I was in a worse situation than this bird’s.” The other one said, “Please tell me, what happened to you”? So the other one told this story:

“Yes, by God it had rained and we went to the area of Awliib and were staying on the plateau. There were many animals and people gathered there on that plateau and every morning they took their animals out to graze on the grasslands where they ate to their fill. Then one day all the other people took their animals down for grazing; I alone took my camels up the slope for grazing. I didn’t take any weapons with me except one stick. After I had been up there for awhile, the camels suddenly started running into different groups from side to side. I said to myself, ‘What is going on?’ and I ran to them carrying my stick. I found that

it was a very big old camel who had gone mad that was chasing my camels. When I said, 'Choo, choo, choo,' and ran at it, it held its head up high in the sky, drew its front legs together and its back legs apart and looked down at me. When it prepared itself to fight, I tried to hit it with my stick on its neck. But when I swung at it, it lashed out at me and tried to bite me. The stick was knocked out of my hand and fell out of reach. The camel ran at me but there was nowhere for me to go. So I turned towards my camels and went into the herd. The mad camel drove the camels at me from this way and that way.

When the camels had nearly killed me, I ran into the herd from one end and out the other while the mad camel was searching here and there for me among the camels. I just ran upwards. I thought to myself, 'This camel is going to kill me right at the spot where I get tired and can run no more.' I ran for some distance. The camel couldn't find me among the herd and when it looked back, it saw me running up the hill. Immediately, it ran after me. It kept getting nearer and nearer.

By the help of God, I saw a big hole dug by a hyena. The camel was just about to catch up with me, so I ran faster. We raced toward that hole.

By the help of God, I reached the hole before the camel and jumped into it. The camel stood over the opening of the hole. I swear that it held its head right at the opening of the hole.

At the back of the hole there was a very big boa constrictor. When it saw the camel, it crawled over the top



of me, pressing me down and caught the camel's mouth. The camel jerked its head up, and struggling with the boa, it pulled it out of the hole. When the boa was out of the hole, it wrapped itself around the entire body of the camel. The camel couldn't get free. The boa pulled the camel to the ground and squeezed it, sucking out its blood. As for me, I said, 'Praise God' and left. I retrieved my stick and went back to my camels. I left the camel and the boa to deal with each other. And so being alone is shunned, even by hyenas. Therefore, I immediately gathered my camels together, took my stick and returned to my friends and the people there."

The camel herder told such a story to illustrate difficulties, just like the difficulty of the bird escaping the rain.

# The Owner of the Shoe

There was a man, a poor man. He was a wood cutter. He would go with a donkey to the hills to cut wood. By these things he made his living. Because he was an upright man, his relatives gave him a woman to marry. He married her and they had a daughter. While the daughter was still an infant, her mother died. When his wife died, his relatives said, "This man is a good man, he treated his wife well." So they gave him another woman to marry. This woman was good to him. She shared with him and cared for his daughter. She herself also bore him a daughter. When she got her own daughter, the kindness and goodness which she used to give to the older girl moved to her own daughter. So she showed favor to her own daughter instead of the older girl. She gave her own daughter more food, she dressed her with nicer clothes and allowed her to sleep in a warm place. She made the older girl work. She didn't give her enough food to satisfy her hunger and made her sleep in a cold place. But the girl did not tell her father, because she didn't want him to quarrel with the woman. At the same time, the woman feared that the girl would tell her husband.

This situation continued on. One day, an old woman, who was a hairdresser, came to the woman. The woman was distressed so she told the hairdresser, "I dislike this girl. She refuses to work. What should I do with her?" she said. The hairdresser replied, "Let her go to that woman that lives over there, the one that no one goes to. Send her there. Something may happen to her there," she said.

(There was a witch who lived far away. People were afraid of her and avoided contact with her. To that witch, they sent the girl.) They gave her a little water for the journey. They said to the girl, “Go to her and bring back the things that she gives to you.” The girl took the water and left.

Now while she was on her way, she found a beautiful red tree beside the path. “Oh my sister, I am thirsty. Pour some water on my roots,” said the tree. The girl had pity on the tree and put some water on its roots. The tree said, “May God grant that you become a beautiful girl, red girl like me.” When the tree said that, her skin took on a beautiful reddish hue. Then she went on her way and she came across another tree which was white. “Oh sister, I am thirsty. Pour a little water on my roots.” The girl had pity on the tree and poured some water on its roots. The tree was happy. “May God grant that your eyes, teeth and fingernails be white like me.” Suddenly her eyes, teeth and fingernails became white. So she left the tree behind and continued on her way. Then she found another tree. It was black with long branches and immediately spoke to her, “Oh my sister, I’m dying of thirst. Pour some water on my roots,” it said. When the girl poured some water, the tree said, “May God grant that your hair, and the black part of your eyes and lips become black like me.” And these parts became black and her hair became long.

Now, when the girl arrived at the witch’s place, the witch knew her and knew that this girl was a good girl. The witch had planted these trees around her place in every direction, therefore she knew by these trees whether the person coming to her was good or not. And now the witch

said, "You there, it is good of you to come. I am going to a place over there because I have something to do. I will come back in the afternoon. While I'm gone, please destroy the house, kill the chickens, and slaughter the animals." And then the witch left. The girl fed the animals until they could eat no more, fed the chickens and thoroughly washed the clothes. She made the house into a very pleasant place and waited for the witch's return. When the witch returned, she was very pleased with what the girl had done. So she said, "You are a good girl, you're good to the bone." She gave her silk clothes, beautiful shoes, and adorned her with gold jewelry. Then the witch said, "Go to your family. May God grant that you have no problems. Come back to me if you need anything," and she accompanied the girl for a ways along the path. The girl returned home in a very good mood.

When her stepmother saw her like this she said, "I'll my send my girl there too," so she asked her daughter to go to the old woman. This girl came across the same trees on her way and when the trees asked her for water she would not water them. She refused to give water to each tree that asked her. She said, "How is it that these trees are speaking? Oh God, protect me from them." Each of the trees wished for her its color and when she refused to give water to the three trees, she became colored. The white tree said, "May part of you become white." The red tree said, "May another part of you become red." And the black tree said, "May still another part become black." When she came to the witch colored in this way, the witch said to herself, "I think a bad girl has come," and she treated her

just like the other girl. She said to her, “I’m going over there and will come back later. Break these things; destroy everything,” and then she left.

When the witch returned, she found that the girl had destroyed everything. She had slaughtered the animals, killed the chickens and broken all the pots and dishes. Everything was in a sorry state. The witch was angry and said, “You are a bad girl! May God grant that you not find happiness.” Then the witch scratched her with her fingernails and drove her away. The black parts of her body bled black blood and the red parts, red blood and the white, white blood. She returned to her mother beaten.

Now the king of that land had been talking about finding a wife for his son. Therefore he said to the people, “Oh my people, please come to me.” When the people gathered, the good girl came near the trough where the king’s horses drink. One of her shoes fell into the trough. She tried to catch it, but it dropped into the water. Now the king was going to say to the people, “I want a wife for my son,” but he decided to water his horse first. He brought the horse to the water, but it refused to drink. The people didn’t know what prevented the horse from drinking the water so they looked at the water. They saw something glittering and took it out of the water. They discovered that it was a shoe. The king said, “Whoever it is, the owner of this shoe will be the wife of my son.” Now the girl was taken by her stepmother away so as not to be seen. The king and his soldiers, when they couldn’t find the girl who had dropped the shoe, looked for the other shoe in the people’s houses. They tried the shoe that they had on every girl’s foot and if

it fit, they took her with them. When they came to the good girl's house, they heard a woman shouting at bird, "Shoo, shoo, shoo," but the bird was saying, "The owner of the shoe is here, the owner of the shoe is in the hole." (The witch had sent this bird to say that.) So the soldiers found the girl in the hole and pulled her out. The king gave her to his son in marriage. Her father was a poor man but the king gave him shops and houses and he became wealthy because of his daughter. They all prospered without difficulties and lived happily ever after. The end.

# Proper Conduct

Proper Conduct always behaves uprightly, for he comes from a decent family.

When he looked for equals among those who are not Beja, he found them wanting.

He checked out their forgiveness and their generosity, on several occasions he simply withdrew from them,

But he didn't find those who thought about goodness and uprightness except among the Beja.

So he chose to become their brother and dwelled in the lands of the Beja.

Pureness and precious brotherhood, ease and comfort he found.

Men whose anger will never flare even though repeatedly mistreated,

Full of security and self control, those are the Bejaawi.

If they don't make it a habit of audaciously and uncontrollably taking advantage of us,

Then we will always have good behavior and forgiveness as our neighbors.

Always will we have good behavior and forgiveness as our neighbors.





