

sends thee, saying, "the bundle, which the wise bound, let a fool untie it. I remain here, I cannot yet go". He, the master, told me, saying, "this bundle, go, give it na Uoua the eldest; do not mention it to her sisters". The boy went out.

He went again to Uoua the second; she opened to him. The boy said, "The bundle here, master says, "the bundle which the wise bound let a fool untie it. Thou alone, I sent thee the bundle; thy sisters, do not mention it to them. I still remain". The boy went out.

He went again to Uoua the third; she opened to him. He entered; 'Master says, "the bundle that the wise bound let a fool untie it. Thou only, I send thee this bundle; thy sisters, do not mention it to them". The boy went out.

He went further to Uoua the youngest; she opened to him. The boy said, 'Master says, "this bundle, thou only I sent it to thee; thy sisters, do not mention it to them. The bundle which the wise bound, let a fool untie it". The boy says, 'I am going now. Tomorrow do not mention me to thy sisters.'

The boy went in the night. He arrived at his master's in the bush. His master asks him, 'Didst thou do as I ordered thee?' The boy says, 'I did do so.'

The women at home, to whom the bundles were sent, Uoua the first kept the bundle in the box. Uoua the second kept it in the box. Uoua the third also, she kept it in the box. Uoua the fourth thought, saying, "The bundle, that he sent me, saying, "let her open it", I will open it, that I see what is in it.'

She opened it; she sees the rats, that are in. She cleans them out; she shaves them. She puts them in pot; she cooks them. She sticks them on a spit; she sticks it in roof. She kept quiet. They live on some days; ten days.

Na Nzuá, who had gone hunting, comes; he is in the house of Uoua the eldest, saying, 'Bring the bundle that I sent thee.' She opens the box; takes out the bundle; she unties it. The rats are all rotten; they have become maggots.

The man goes out; he goes to Uoua the second, 'Bring the bundle that I sent thee.' The woman opens the box; she takes it out; she unties it. In it are all maggots.

The man goes out; goes to Uoua the third. Says, 'Bring the bundle that I sent thee.' The woman opens the box; she takes out the bundle; she unties it. In it are maggots only.

The man goes out; goes to Uoua the youngest, 'Bring the bundle that I sent thee.' The woman stands up; she takes off the spit from the roof. The rats are dried.

The man laughs. He goes outside; he calls the crowd of the people of the village. He says, 'You, gentlemen, I went a-hunting. I tied four bundles; I sent them to my wives, saying, "the bundle which the wise tied, let the fool untie it". I made ten days in the bush. Today I have come home, saying, "You, wives, bring the bundles that I sent you." They take out the bundles; those of the elder three are rotten; the bundle of the fourth, of the youngest, is dried. Her rats are these. The elder three are fools; they are not intelligent. I will marry the youngest.' The elder three went away.

This brought about the saying: 'Elder and younger shall not marry one man.' Because the youngest took from her elder the man, because of her shrewdness.

Thus far we heard it. Finished.

Six Nyanga Texts

The following texts were collected in the field and translated from the Nyanga by Professor D. Biebuyck, formerly of Lovanium University, Congo Republic.

The Nyanga inhabit the forest region of north-western Kivu Province in the Congo Republic. They are a small, but culturally very rich, patrilineal group, who subsist mainly by hunting and growing bananas.

The oral prose tradition is rich and varied, there being a wide range of stories, legends, epic songs, proverbs, riddles, and prayers. The texts presented here belong to the *mushinga* category, that is to say they are recited and not sung as are *uwano*. The majority of men and women know some *mushinga*, while only a few people know *uwano*.

Two men went to trap in the forest. While they were trapping, one of them killed a young wild pig. They went to the village; said to one another, 'If we lay this young pig aside (which is our first kill), then our traps will fail to kill; and so the headman and

others will they not hear about that in the village?' The other one, he also said to his companion, 'When we have finished eating this small pig there in the forest, the teeth of the pig cannot be hidden, will the village headman not hear?' They came to a decision to eat the young pig. They said, 'As we are here, both of us, there is no one who will take the news to the village, so our traps will not become "not-killing anything." They took the small pig, cut it into pieces: the two men shared it. After they had set their traps again and had finished eating the animal they went up to the village.

Two days passed; they are in the village. One of them got up (early) to sit round the fire in the men's hut, where his companions are. He was giving other news, and there they are, laughing, while sitting round the fire. And he who has remained in the house sleeping, he got up and went to the place where his companion is. He arrived there; they are laughing. He said to his companion, 'You, what news are you telling here, not that of the small pig we ate in the forest?' All his companions said to him, 'Look! you have eaten a young pig in the forest!' His companion told him, 'You are shaming yourself, for I have been telling other news and there you are appearing and revealing (the secret of) the small pig, saying that we have hidden it and have eaten it in the forest.'

All the men, together with the headman, finished hearing this news of the hidden thing.

2

There was a man; he had begotten seven children. Their names were Yangara, all of them together, all had this same name and their father also was Yangara. Yangara said to his children: 'Because you quarrel with one another about this name Yangara, you all go to the forest to kill a buffalo, then you will be able to take the name of Yangara.'

All these, all together they went to the forest. They went to run across the buffaloes' path. The elder (brother) asked his brothers saying, 'What are we going to do?' The one who follows at his back said to their elder, 'You will know how we will act, you will find the teaching that will make known to us (how) to kill this buffalo, because you are Yangara as my father is also.' The elder set his foot on the ground; dug out a

trench. And the one who follows him said to him, 'You have not covered the ditch.' The third one said to them, 'Your brainpower is useless'; he took a leaf, covered (the trench) with it there. After some days had passed, there died in this ditch a buffalo. The fourth Yangara tied it up; took it out. In order to carry it, Yangara the fourth took a knife, and cut the animal; cut it into pieces, just pieces. The fifth one wrapped it; wrapped it up, and carried it to the village: he too was up to that knowledge. Also the sixth one carried it on his back, laid it down at his father's; he also was Yangara. Their father inquired about all their knowledge: to dig, to cover, to take the animal out of the trench, to carry it, to cut it into pieces, to wrap it up in bundles.

Their younger (brother) remained behind (i.e. was left) among them, the last-born, he sought a piece of wood and beat it saying, 'He who has died may he rise again!' The buffalo stood up, went his way to the forest from where it had come. This child told his father, saying that he had sent the buffalo back to the forest because it was (too) small to share out to all the people; therefore he found out how to send it back. His father said to him, 'You also have not done wrong.' All of them he called by the name Yangara.

3

There was a man; he begot a boy. This man became sick of an illness. When he was about to die, he asked his child, saying, 'When I will have finished dying, what will you do?' He said to him that he did not know. He said to him, 'When he dies you will cut off the little finger, that little finger will save you; when he has finished dying, that little finger you will put it near the door, you will dig it in there.' Then his father died; he cut off his finger, and dug out a grave in the middle of the village ground.

When a month had passed after his father had died, he woke up early, saw in the village houses had grown up like crops around where he was. He became chief; all the inhabitants were bringing him tribute.

While they were sitting thus with joy, his wife questioned him. And there where the finger had been dug in, there was sprouting a *musae*-tree. She asked her husband saying, 'We were poor

and now we are rich, from where does it come our richness?' When she got tired with her husband, he went to tell her about the secret counsel which had been left to him by his father, what he had been asked to do and how he had put that little finger in the grave. When his wife had heard this news—just imagine, she was being adulterous with a man—she gave the news to her lover, all the news, what her husband had done and why he had become chief.

In the early morning he assembled all his people; they came, asked him why this tree was staying here, that such a tree was not in the middle of the village. He failed to give them a reply, he said that this tree was self-grown. She appeared there, his sweetheart, his wife, revealed everything of how this tree had grown. This chief lost his chief's status.

4

There was a woman, she gives birth to two children; the first-born is Bureo and the other one is Murero. Their mother is Nyabureo.

His mother said to Bureo as she was going to the forest, 'When you see the child is crying, cook him dry bananas.' After his mother had gone to the forest, there, where Bureo has remained, the child begins to cry. He took it, killed it, cooked it with the dry bananas, saying his mother had told him when the child begins crying to cook it with bananas. He cooked it, having finished killing him. His mother came back, asked Bureo, saying, 'Where is your younger brother?' He replied that she had said to him that when the child cries he should cook it with bananas; he had finished cooking it.

His mother, when she saw that she does not see her child, sang:

'Bureo, stupid fellow (lit. 'Father', 'venereal disease'),
Has eaten my child.
Catch for me Bureo
He has eaten my child
Catch for me Bureo
He has eaten it with bananas
Catch for me Bureo.'

While she was chasing him here and there (to and fro) to kill him, he escaped.

There where he escaped, he met women from God's place (*il rencontra des femmes de chez Dieu*); they showed him the way. There where he went he met tree-clearers felling trees. They said to him, 'What are you fleeing for?' He said to them that he was fleeing from the women who say that he had revealed their secret and that the secret of women is not to be disclosed.

There where his mother was left, she sang:

'Catch for me Bureo,
He has eaten my child
He has eaten it with bananas.'

He passed beyond the tree-clearers; he came out near the river there where water is drawn. He met his paternal aunt (lit. 'female father'); his paternal aunt drew water after she had put Bureo in the jar. When she had arrived at (the house of) Kirimu (Monster), her husband the Monster Shebeni Muesa told his wife to give him water; she gave it to him. When he had tasted from it, he said that the water smelt like man. The Monster drank the water of another jar. After he had finished drinking that water, he got up (to go). This paternal aunt took the child away, put it on a heap of dirt, showed him the road that is leading to his maternal uncles, the Bats. There where he had gone to his maternal uncles, they took Bureo, forged him, sang:

'Bureo has refused the forge
The forge is this one
I am forging the sororal nephew
The forge is this one.'

After they had finished forging him, the wanderer went, being called by the Monster Shebeni Muesa. He turned up at (the house of) the Monster. This one said to him that there, at his house, no other man arrives who is shaved with a razor. He told him, 'Let us go to Misukuubira, where comes out the dew of fire.' There they meet early, to fight with one another, to rush headlong one against the other. Bureo told him, 'We will go to Misukuubira when we have finished gambling.' He sang:

'He is gambling with Monster
May his gambling beat him!'

They cast the dice (shells) one on the other; Bureo hit all the Monster's things. After he had been completely beaten, he told

the child: that they should go to Misukuubira, both of them.

They set out to there, the child sang, 'We go with Shebeni to Misukuubira.'

They arrived there; Shebeni Muesa died there.

The child returned with the trophy of the Monster to show its paternal aunt that Shebeni Muesa is dead.

This Bureo went with fame; he was strong in the village of Monster Shebeni Muesa.

5

Sun and Rain started an argument with one another.

A young Monkey had begotten a daughter in another village. Rain arrived there, looking for this young girl. After he had arrived there, he talked to Monkey about his daughter. The father of the girl refused. After Rain has received this answer, he returned without anything and covered with shame.

When Sun had seen that Rain failed to get the girl, he, Sun, arrived there, asked for the girl, got her, and so became son-in-law of Monkey. War (danger) arrived, pursued Monkey. This war killed Monkey's wife and all his children, and he also had finished fleeing. There, where Monkey had fled, he shouted, 'You, Sun, because of the way you shone therefore I lose a lot of people.'

One day again, they hunted and hunted at Monkey's place. Rain also fell. They left him above, he had finished climbing up into the trees. Rain did not stop, it fell very hard. The hunters went home because of too much rain. After Rain has finished falling and Monkey has been saved, he (Rain) came to where he was and told him, 'You have given your daughter to Sun, saying he can save you, but I here have saved you and this although you have denied me your daughter.'

After he had thus been saved by Rain, Monkey took away his daughter from Sun, gave her to Rain because he had saved him. Rain went home with the daughter of Monkey where before he had been refusing her. His strength and his strong intelligence, it is because of that that he got her.

6

Isimbasiimba and Ntanga made blood-brotherhood. Both are with their fathers and their mothers, together, all of them. One

day, Ntanga's father became ill. Isimbasiimba told his friend, 'Medicine can cure your father, it is good to search for the bark of a *musoke*-tree, you will tie it fast to the belly; it's like a belt that you will tie around your father's belly, but strong people should tie it, not people who have no strength.' He took the bark of a *musoke*-tree, fastened it to the belly firmly, saying, 'As long as your father has not recovered, you will not remove this belt from around his belly.'

Days have passed; his father was cured. When they saw his father had completely recovered they untied the belt. Ntanga's body went up, then sank down, in the middle there remained nothing. Ntanga had said much wrong about his friend, saying his friend had made him pass through amazing things so that he becomes a cripple.

When days have passed, Isimbasiimba's father became ill; he sent a messenger to Ntanga. He asked him to show him a medicine, as his father had become ill. Ntanga arrived at the end of the village; they are beginning to weep as the father of his companion is already dead. He says, go, first, and bite on a small piece of wood that he may die leaving to you a good word. He went to bite on a small piece of wood: Ntanga said, 'Bite hard; hold on strongly, don't let it go.' Isimbasiimba, his father died, and he is still (busy) on that small piece of wood; there where he bit on it he also died there.

These two men outdid one another in amazing things in this way.

9

Onecike

This and the following text were collected in the field and translated into French from the Tetela by J. Jacobs with the collaboration of W. A. A. Wilson in the preparation of the English version. *Onecike* was first published in an article 'Principes généraux de la nouvelle orthographe otetela-kikusu (Kasai-Kivu)', J. Jacobs (with the collaboration of B. Omonga and H. Lukale), *Kongo-Overzee*, vol. xxv, 1959.

The Tetela are an important Bantu-speaking people of the Central Congo.

THERE was a man who had a child; when he had had this child and he had reached the age of about seven, his mother