

THE STORY OF THE WIFE AND THE ROBBERS

Richard Sundstrom, Geleb - Eritrea (Swedish Missionary ca. 1897)

Once a man lived alone with his family and his herd in a lonely place. And around it he made a very high enclosure.

One evening he said to his wife: "Here I sit dozing, now I will go to sleep, but thou keep watch and if any band of robbers appears awake me then". So he said and went to sleep.

While the wife is keeping watch, robbers approached and surrounded the enclosure. Now the wife sat there rocking with her child, sleeping on her back and would not awaken her husband but preferred to let him sleep.

She then sang the following, seeing the robbers simulating that she did not see them:

Lull, Lull! May the child of my enemy shed tears!
The number of thy uncles is greater than that of the stars.
Thy mother is more beautiful than the moon in its brightness
Thy father's shield alone is enough to close the opening of the enclosure.
Thy father's sword cuts the calfs and intestines.

The robbers having surrounded the enclosure heard this and said: "How will we be able to plunder them if their number is greater than that of the stars and if their shield alone is enough to close the opening in the enclosure and hinder us from entering and if his sword is sharp enough to cut the calfs and intestines? No, let us slip away. So they left them alone and went away.

In this way the wife saved her cows and her husband.

ድግም እሴት ወሃምተት

ዎሮት እናስ ማል ንዎድ ወጾዎሁ እት ቁሸት ዐለ። ወኬሉብ ብዙሕ ወቁል ዋዩቱ። ሐቴ ምሌት እግል እሴቱ። ኣና ተዐናካትኮ እግል እስኩብ ቱ። ወእንቲ ዕቀቢ ከከራዩ መጽአት ምን ግብእ ዐርሲኒ ቤላ ወሰክበ።

ወለ እሴት እት ተዐቅብ ዛምተት መጽአው ክለሐጹር ትከልከለው። ለእሴት ሀዩ ጅና ሓዝለት ታ ከእግል ብእሳ እግል ኢተዐናስ ልሰኩብ ፈቱት። ለእግል ለጅና ክእና ትብሎ ኣምሴት እግል ለዛምተት እት ትርእዮም ከም ኢትርኤ እንዶ ትመሰለት።

እሰረሮ፡ አባዬ ወልዱ ልምብዎ።
ዕልብ እሊ ከዋክብ ሓሎታትካ በዝሐ።
ወምን በርህ ለወናሕ ነሐና እምካ በርህ።
ወገሉብ ኣቡካ ባባት ደብኦ።
ሰይፍ ኣቡካ መሐ ከሬ ወመዎ።

ለዛምተት ሀዬ ለሓጽር ክልኩላም እት እንቶም እሲ ሰምዐው። ከ ሕና ዕልቦም ምን ከቀክብ
ለበዝሕ ወግለቦም ባብ በኑ ለደብእ ወሰይፎም መሐ ወመዎ ለከሬ ከኣፎ እግል ንዝመቶም።
ኒጊስ እብ ነፍስና ሌግ ቤለው። ወእንዶ ሐድግዎም ጌሰው። ለ እሲት እብ ክእና ኣሓሃ
ወብእሳ ኣድሐነት።