

A COLLECTION OF 100 NUER (SOUTH SUDAN) PROVERBS AND WISE S



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to

MARYKNOLL SOCIETY

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A COLLECTION OF 100 NUER (SUDAN) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS

1. **Ɛ yak mi cɛ yaŋ cam la nyɔkɛ ni jɛn kɛ ʏɔk piny.**
Swahili: Fisi aliyemuuma ng'ombe atafanya hivyo tena.
French: L'hyène qui a mordu la vache, le fera encore.
English: The hyena that bit the cow will do it again.
Teaching: This proverb teaches that we should not be given the opportunity to repeat mistakes. If action was not taken against an offence, then the person will repeat it. we should take punitive measures against a perpetrator so that they do not repeat their mistakes.
Bible parallel: Romans 2:2 *Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*

2. **Bak cãŋɔ kɛ bakɔ.**
Swahili: Kila siku hupambazuka kivyake.
French: Chaque matin vient de sa façon.
English: Each day dawns in its way.
Teaching: Opportunities in life are different for each person. During a certain period in life, a person may be wealthy and for another it may be a time of strive. Circumstances may change vice versa because good luck is not constant. One cannot foretell what the future will bring.
Bible parallel: Daniel 3:17 *If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king.*

3. **/Ci kuac biɛl kɛ rit.**
Swahili: Ngozi ya chui haigeuki rangi.
French: La peau du léopard ne change jamais la couleur.
English: The leopard's skin does not change colour.
Teaching: A person's character does not change even when they present themselves to the community as otherwise. Pretenses do not last and at one time, the true character of a person is revealed due to circumstances and situations. *Character makes a man/woman.*
Bible parallel: Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*

4. **/Ca buɔt pɔc.**
Swahili: Kidonda hakiguswi.
French: On ne touche pas la plaie.
English: A wound is not touched.
Teaching: When a person is hurting emotionally, we should not remind them of their agonies. We should be considerate. When you revisit painful memories, the repercussions can be devastating and can cause more damage to the person emotionally.
Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:32 *Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*

5. /Ci ley mi bar juälε mac dee bäl.

Swahili: Wanyama walio na mkia mrefu hawafai kuuvuka moto.

French: Les animeaux à longue queue, ne doivent pas sauterau dessusdu feu.

English: Animals with a long tail should not step over the fire.

Teaching: The proverb is used as a warning. A person with a weakness, or is a trouble maker should stay clear of trouble. If not, their your problems will be brought out to the knowledge of the community. Maintain peace and good relationships with other members of the community.

Bible parallel: 2 Peter 1:8 *For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

6. /Ca Kuoth kuok.

Swahili: Mungu hawezi kusukumwa.

French: On ne peut pas pousser Dieu.

English: God cannot be pushed (to do what welike).

Teaching: The opportunities and possessions we have are provided by God and are chosen by Him for our appopriate use. We cannot manipulate God to do what we want, but we pray humbly to request for our needs to be met. Appreciate what you have.

Bible parallel: James 1:17 *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.*

7. /Ca puᵇth kuany piny.

Swahili: Hatima yako haichaguliwi.

French: On ne te choisit pas ta fin.

English: The blessing (your fate or destiny) is not chosen.

Teaching: No human being can control his/her future. A person can endeavour to better their life, but the knowledge of their achievements of the future is only known to God.

Bible parallel: Jeremiah 29:11 *For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.*

8. /Ci run diaal çetke cuëëk.

Swahili: Miaka sio kama mapacha.

French: Les années ne sont pas comme les jumeaux.

English: Years are not like twins.

Teaching: One season can never be similar to the next. We may be happy, successful and achieve a lot at a certain time, while at a different time circumstances could change and not be as before.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

9. /Ci raan pith piny çetke juäl yaan.

Swahili: Watu hawakui wakielekea chini kama mkia wa ng'ombe.

French: Les gens ne grandissent pas en allant au dessous comme la queue.

English: People do not grow downward like a cow's tail.

Teaching: This proverb encourages people to focus on progress and not retrogression. A person should work towards beneficial goals to build their lives constantly. Losing focus results in failure.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 2:2 *Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.*

10. /Ci wuṓth guaathde duij.

Swahili: Makalio hayakosi mahali pake.

French: Les fesses ne manquent pas leur place.

English: The buttock does not miss its place.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that we all have our purpose in the community, and we are expected to take up our responsibilities. Each person's abilities and wisdom helps to build the team.

Bible parallel: Hebrews 10:24-25 *And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

11. /Ca raan luek ke wäde.

Swahili: Watu hawafai kukosolewa wakati wanapo ondoka.

French: On ne peut pas corriger les gens quant ils quittent.

English: People must not be corrected at their departure time.

Teaching: This proverb advises that we should correct a person who makes a mistake immediately it happens to allow them time to change. Delaying correction may lead to permanent damage and inability to reverse it.

Bible parallel: 1 John 1:9 *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

12. /Ci yöth thokde tee kacä.

Swahili: Kubadilisha maoni yako sio kuwa muongo.

French: En changeant ton opinion, n'est pas être malin.

English: Changing your mind is not being a liar.

Teaching: A person can change their opinions or views about a matter, as dictated by facts and circumstances. Presenting a different opinion from the previous does not mean one was telling a lie.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 1:13 *Therefore, preparing your minds for action, and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.*

13. Ciek mi jiaak dṓṓ cṓwde a thil jiaç.

Swahili: Mume wa mke mbaya huzeeka bila tumbo.

French: Le mari d'une femme mauvaise, vieillit sans estomac.

English: The husband of a bad woman grows old without stomach.

Teaching: A bad relationship causes distress. A wife should take good care of the family and especially a husband until death. A good relationship makes one healthy emotionally and physically.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 5:22-23 *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.*

14. /C*ĩ* riek wun c*ę*tk*e* nhiaal.

Swahili: Matatiza hayawezi kutabiriwa kama mvua inayotarajiwa.

French: On ne peut pas prédire les problèmes comme la tomber de la pluie.

English: Problems can't be foreseen like the coming of the rain.

Teaching: In life troubles arise unexpectedly. A person should be ready to appreciate the negative circumstances in life and learn to overcome them in order to continue with their daily endeavours.

Bible parallel: John 16:33 *I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.*"

15. /Ca woor t*ę*w c*ą*ŋ rik*ä*.

Swahili: Wakati wa njaa hata nyasi inayoliwa, inayotambaa haiwekwi.

French: Lors de la famine, on ne conserve pas les herbes qu'on mange et celles qui rampent.

English: In times of famine even eatable creeping grass is not kept.

Teaching: The proverb advises us to use the resources we have at our disposal to resolve a problem. All resources have a benefit in our lives. We may not have had the opportunity to use them.

Bible parallel: Genesis 41:49 *And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.*

16. /Ca yoam dee t*ę*t guath mi thil pii.

Swahili: Shimo la maji halichimbwi mahali pasipo na maji.

French: On ne creuse pas un puit d'eau, là-où il n'y a pas d'eau.

English: A water hole is not dug in a place without water.

Teaching: For a person to succeed in achieving their goal, one should operate in an appropriate place. Whether it is a relationship or a business, the other party and environment should be receptive and share your goals.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 21:5 *The plans of the diligent lead surely to abundance, but everyone who is hasty comes only to poverty.*

17. /C*ĩ* kal a ru*ĩ*ic.

Swahili: Mwanamme asiye miliki ng'ombe hawezi kutawala.

French: L'homme qui n'a pas une vache, ne peut pas gouverner.

English: A man who does not possess cows cannot govern.

Teaching: Leadership skills are learned from basic level in a community. If a person cannot manage his own possessions, such as cows in the Nuer community, then the people cannot accept him as a leader. The ability to command respect, is by managing your family and property successfully.

Bible parallel: Acts 20:28 *Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.*

18. /Ca wäl math baḥ.

Swahili: Dawa hainywewi bure.

French: On n'avale pas le médicament sans motif.

English: The medicine is not drunk free (For every cure there is a cost).

Teaching: Nothing comes easy or is for free. Even if a solution solves your problems and is provided by another person, there are always expectations and consequences. One must struggle to resolve their problems themselves.

Bible parallel: Philippians 4:6 *Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.*

19. Cuḷ kuethä ke kuëth nõḡ bath cuḡä.

Swahili: Kujibu matusi kwa matusi huwafanya watu wapoteze mwelekeo uliofaa.

French: Pour répondre aux injures, fait les gens perdre la direction.

English: Returning insult for insult makes people to loose sight of the right.

Teaching: It is used to warn people to keep calm when in an argument or when abused. Give time for reasoning because arguments do not provide beneficial solutions but aggravate a situation.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:29 *Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.*

20. Cuḷ kuethä ke kuëth nõḡ bath cuḡä.

Swahili: Kujibu matusi kwa matusi huwafanya watu wapoteze mwelekeo uliofaa.

French: Pour répondre aux injures, fait les gens perdre la direction.

English: Returning insult for insult makes people to loose sight of the right.

Teaching: We should not let ourselves be involved in a circumstance or situation which we are aware is not appropriate. For instance, we should avoid engaging in relationships which are not healthy because the consequences will be unpleasant.

Bible parallel: Psalm 26:4-5 *I do not sit with men of falsehood, nor do I consort with hypocrites. I hate the assembly of evildoers, and I will not sit with the wicked.*

21. /Cu ruac guäth mj /ken waḥ.

Swahili: Usiongee kwenye kichaka ambacho hakijachomwa.

French: Ne parle pas dans uneforêt qui ne brûle pas.

English: Do not talk in the bush that has not being burnt.

Teaching: It is used to warn against the unacceptable behaviour of discussing other people negatively, while assuming it is a secret. You may not be aware of their relationship with the person you are discussing. They may not appreciate your behaviour and will report to them. As the saying goes: *Even walls and trees have ears.*

Bible parallel: James 3:5-6 *So also the tongue is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And the tongue is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.*

22. /Cu riet yor cētke with war.

Swahili: Usiyatupe maneno kama kijiti usiku.

French: Ne jette pas les paroles la nuit comme une tige.

English: Do not throw words like a stick in the night.

Teaching: This proverb is used to warn against careless speech. We should avoid speaking without thinking about the consequences of our words. Careless talk can hurt other people, and it may be difficult or impossible to reverse their damage. We should speak with wisdom. *Words spoken can never be taken back.*

Bible parallel: Proverbs 25:11 *A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in a setting of silver.*

23. /Cu thokdu nam cētke cäl.

Swahili: Usijionyeshane kama samaki Nile Perch alivyofanya.

French: Ne t'expose pas toi-même, comme avait fait le poisson nile perché.

English: Do not give yourself away like the Nile Perch did.

Teaching: The proverb warns us not to be proud and expose ourselves to public observation. When we show ourselves to be important and become showy, we might get into trouble easily. The Nile Perch is silver shiny, larger than most fish, hence easy to trap. We should be humble whatever our status in community.

Bible parallel: Matthew 5:1-48 *Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ...*

24. /Cu rō bi nyaany cāat.

Swahili: Usibaki kwenye ukingo wa mto.

French: Ne reste pas au bord de la rivière.

English: Do not remain on the riverbank.

Teaching: Passiveness and indecisiveness is not helpful to a person or others. One should make a decision and take action on a matter instead of ignoring it.

Bible parallel: Romans 1:20 *For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

25. Cēt cakcak ke wāny rāl ke rök lēp.

Swahili: Madai ya uongo ni sawa na kuuma ulimi wako unapotafuna kipande cha nyama ngumu.

French: La fausse allegation, est comme piquer ta langue en mastiquant une viande dure.

English: At false allegation is like biting your tongue while chewing a hard piece of meat.

Teaching: This proverb warns us against speaking falsehood. We speak lies knowingly and with guilt in our hearts. We should stay away from self-inflicted pain such as a painful conscience. We should be truthful always, because the truth always reveals itself in the end.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:25 *Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.*

26. /Cj ciqok a doth guäth jal.

Swahili: Mguu huwa haubaki njiani.

French: La jambe ne reste jamais sur la route.

English: The foot does not remain along the way.

Teaching: The proverb reminds us that as human beings we cannot be without mistakes in life. We may go against community/human norms and expectations occasionally. However, we need to adjust to the acceptable behaviours that meet the universal values.

Bible parallel: James 5:19-20 *My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.*

27. /Cu guac ke naath cetke dow yoth.

Swahili: Usiwe na upinzani na watu kama ndama huwa.

French: Ne desaccord pas avec les gens comme font souvent de veaux.

English: Do not dissent with people like calves do.

Teaching: It is used to encourage people to cooperate with others for common development, socially and economically, instead of antagonizing. We should be team players.

Bible parallel: Psalm 133:1-3 *A Song of Ascents. Of David. Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.*

28. /Ca wääth kuän mal jek.

Swahili: Mwanamme katili sio rahisi apate chakula.

French: Un homme violent, ne trouve pas la nourriture facilement.

English: A violent man doesn't easily find food.

Teaching: The proverb warns against people having unfriendly, disrespectful and unacceptable behaviours which are not beneficial. One becomes segregated by others. We should therefore, ensure we have acceptable behaviours to build ourselves and others, and for acceptability in community.

Bible parallel: Romans 16:17 *I appeal to you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and create obstacles contrary to the doctrine that you have been taught; avoid them.*

29. Ciqor baac noje thil lieq.

Swahili: Upofu wa moyo husababisha kutokuelewana.

French: La cécité du Cœur amène la méprendre.

English: Blindness of the heart brings misunderstanding.

Teaching: It encourages people to accommodate and accept other's opinions. Our individual opinion is not enough because others may be wiser and require a chance to give their views.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 1:5 *Let the wise hear and increase in learning, and the one who understands obtain guidance.*

30. /Cu bī rōm kē wīc Nyankiir.

Swahili: Usikita fute kichwa kilichokatwa cha Nyankiir.

French: Ne cherche pas la tête coupée de Nyankiir.

English: Do not look for the severed head of Nyankiir (problems).

Teaching: This proverb is related to a historical happening of a young woman called Nyankiir, who has social problems because of social and cultural injustices. She was expected to remain in the system as culture demanded. She chose to flee and sort protection in a refugee camp and later went into exile. This saying is used to warn people not to look for problems in daily life. When we go against community norms which dictate our social and cultural expectations it could lead us into trouble. In different opinion, it also encourages us to seek feasible solutions when there are troubles. We should not expect to face defeat, but fight to win. (Nyankiir did not get beheaded, but changed her life and that of others forever.)

Bible parallel: Proverbs 3:5-6 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.*

31. /Cē buḡm ɛ tet cētnikē thōt deet yier.

Swahili: Sio vigumu sana kumwelekeza mbuzi kuuvuka mto.

French: Ce n'est très difficile de guider la chèvre pour traverser la rivière.

English: It is not so difficult as to drive a goat across the river.

Teaching: The proverb teaches about determination to achieve whatever you set out to achieve, however difficult it may seem. Nothing is impossible to achieve. One just needs a plan and focus.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 9:24-27 *Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. So I do not run aimlessly; I do not box as one beating the air. But I discipline my body and keep it under control, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.*

32. /Cī liāa guān ran a rēet.

Swahili: Kifo cha baba hakimfanyi mwanawe kuwa yatima.

French: La mort du père, ne fait pas que l'enfant soit orphelin.

English: The death of the father does not make the son an orphan.

Teaching: The Nuer culturally allowed for polygamous marriages, and continuity of support for his family by his brothers once he had passed on. The children then belonged to the same bloodline and were nurtured as if he was alive. They had complete families to live with and grow with. The community supports them too. As the African saying says "It takes a village to grow a child."

Bible parallel: Titus 2:1-15 *But as for you, teach what accords with sound doctrine. Older men are to be sober-minded, dignified, self-controlled, sound in faith, in love, and in steadfastness. Older women likewise are to be reverent in behavior, not slanderers or slaves to much wine. They are to teach what is good, and so train the young women to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled, pure, working at home, kind, and submissive to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be reviled. ...*

33. /Cu ḡak lat muth.

Swahili: Usiyafanye mambo gizani.

French: Ne fais pas les choses dans la tenebre.

English: Do not do things in the darkness.

Teaching: This proverb encourages openness and transparency. To prevent speculation and being misunderstood by others, we should avoid doing things in secret. The truth will always be exposed later.

Bible parallel: *Zechariah 8:16 These are the things that you shall do: Speak the truth to one another; render in your gates judgments that are true and make for peace;*

34. /Cu rɔ j̄iɔp kak mi /c̄i bi luāḡ ke puɔr.

Swahili: Usitayarisha shamba ambalo hutaweza kulima.

French: Ne prépare pas un champ que tu ne peux cultiver.

English: Do not clean the field that you will not be able to cultivate.

Teaching: We should choose to undertake only endeavours which we can handle successfully. If it is resources, we should obtain only what is necessary and not excess. Greed and failure to be satisfied with what we have makes us fail to accomplish our intended goal.

Bible parallel: *Proverbs 11:28 Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will flourish like a green leaf.*

35. D̄it ruac nɔḡe thiemthieem.

Swahili: Maneno mengi huleta neno mbaya.

French: Plusieurs paroles, donnent une mauvaise.

English: Too many words bring a bad word.

Teaching: We should limit our conversations, to only what is necessary and relevant at the time. Too much talking causes one to make mistakes and we hurt other people. We should control our speech.

Bible parallel: *1 Peter 4:11 Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever.*

36. D̄iit ni j̄any teekä k̄ä nyin wec muɔɔn.

Swahili: Maisha marefu ni heri kuliko utajiri.

French: Mieux-vaut une longue vie, que la richesse.

English: Long life is better than earthly wealth.

Teaching: Human beings should appreciate life more than wealth. A long life allows one to serve and develop the community and get satisfaction from it. One can have wealth but it fails to provide satisfaction and fulfilment.

Bible parallel: *Isaiah 58:11 And the LORD will guide you continually and satisfy your desire in scorched places and make your bones strong; and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.*

37. E w̄icdu /ca mut ke puɔl r̄et.

Swahili: Usikubali nywele yako inyolewe kwa wembe butu.

French: N'accepte pas tes cheveux soient coupés par une lame émoussée.

English: Don't let your hair be shaved with a blunt blade.

Teaching: This proverb warns us not to walk into trouble when we are aware. When we realize that problematic and complicated situations are facing us, we should avoid them. We should not involve ourselves to be part of difficult and unpleasant situations we could have avoided.

Bible parallel: 2 Peter 3:3-4 *Knowing this first of all, that scoffers will come in the last days with scoffing, following their own sinful desires. They will say, "Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since the fathers fell asleep, all things are continuing as they were from the beginning of creation."*

38. **Ɛ duel mi Ɖ dak pinyɔ, /ca de nyɔk kɛ loc thɪn nhial.**

Swahili: Nyumba iliyovunjika msingi wake, haiwezi kukarabatiwa na iendelea kusimama.

French: La maison que sa fondation est détruite, ne peut être réparée et continuée à se maintenir.

English: A house that is broken in its foundation, cannot be repaired and maintained standing.

Teaching: Once a relationship has been affected by a problem, it is very difficult to reverse it to be as it used to be. Reconciliation and forgiveness may take place, but the bad memory will always be present in their conscience.

Bible parallel: Matthew 18:21-22 *Then Peter came up and said to him, "Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you seven times, but seventy times seven."*

39. **Gɔa ni kɛk mɪ ɔaa kã kuak tɪ ŋuan.**

Swahili: Sifa nzuri ni bora kuliko utajiri.

French: Une bonne réputation est meilleur que la richesse.

English: Good reputation is better than wealth.

Teaching: It is used to remind us not to focus on just gaining wealth because it does not last, but respect and appreciation by other people and yourself, is more valuable in life and can be carried through to future generations.

Bible teaching: 2 Timothy 2:15 *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.*

40. **Gaat kɛ kuaay ti ruun ti.**

Swahili: Watoto ni mbegu za siku za usoni.

French: Les enfants sont les fruits du futur.

English: Children are the seeds of the future.

Teaching: We should invest in our children so that they build a good future for themselves and the community. Teaching them good values and acceptable values helps to carry these to their own children, maintaining stable individuals, families and communities.

Bible parallel: Psalm 127:3-5 *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

41. **Guec lenye liem.**

Swahili: Kujitafutia ni bora kuliko kuomba omba.

French: Chercher est bon que mendier.

English: Seeking is better than begging.

Teaching: It encourages us to be independent and not depend on other people when we have the abilities to feed for ourselves. Whatever little ability we have it should be used to constructively benefit oneself and others. Dependency leads to poverty because one will never have sufficient provisions.

Bible parallel: 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 *For even when we were with you, we would give you this command: If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat. For we hear that some among you walk in idleness, not busy at work, but busybodies. Now such persons we command and encourage in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work quietly and to earn their own living.*

42. **Goor ciok rol ikä.**

Swahili: Mguu hutunza koo.

French: La jambe soigne la gorge.

English: The leg looks after the throat.

Teaching: With the ability to move your body to source for provisions, one is able to obtain food and other requirements in order to sustain their lives. A person must work to ensure he/she does not lack basic human needs. Laziness should always be discouraged.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 6:6-11 *Go to the ant, O sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise. Without having any chief, officer, or ruler, she prepares her bread in summer and gathers her food in harvest. How long will you lie there, O sluggard? When will you arise from your sleep? A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest, ...*

43. **Gəaj rə a ɲuot thəl /kenɛ ji kac.**

Swahili: Jikunjeni kabla nyoka haijawauma.

French: Courbez-vous avant que le serpent vous pique.

English: Bend yourselves when the snake has not yet bitten you.

Teaching: It is used to warn us about engaging in dangerous activities when we are aware of the danger. We should avoid such engagements fully before it is too late.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 27:12 *The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.*

44. **Gəa ni lat kä ɣöö ɲäci duɔɔr golä kä laru ke je.**

Swahili: Ni vyema kusema unayoyajua mwenyewe, badala ya yale uliyoyasikia.

French: Mieux-vaut de parler ce que tu connais seul, que ce que tu as entendu.

English: Better you say what you know in person than what you have heard people say.

Teaching: Facts are better than hearsay. We should learn to talk about matters that can be supported by factual information, rather than that which you have no evidence about. This prevents disagreements, shame and mistrust.

Bible parallel: Leviticus 19:16 *You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.*

45. **Gat mi thiel bəc leny rə maac.**

Swahili: Mtoto mtukutu huwa rahisi kuingia kwa moto.

French: C'est facile d'un enfant coquin de tomber dans le feu.

English: A rascal child gets easily into the fire.

Teaching: We should have dignity and not be trouble makers. A person who is problematic easily gets into trouble with other people because of his attitude, behaviours or talk. Try to change them.

Bible parallel: Matthew 18:15 *If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.*

46. **Gat kəl mī pəl lenyε gaat daŋ wäl ti dɔ̄aar.**

Swahili: Mtoto mmoja mwenye busala ni bora kuliko kumi wajinga.

French: Mieux-vaut un enfant intelligent que dix idiots.

English: One wise child is better than ten foolish ones.

Teaching: It teaches that one person can be more useful alone, than even many people together. One wise person can help a community or a family.

Bible parallel: James 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him.*

47. **Jɔk ruac ε thiel liɛŋ.**

Swahili: Maneno ya masengenyo huleta kutoelewanwa.

French: Le médire cause le méprendre.

English: Words said at the back cause misunderstanding.

Teaching: It encourages people to be open, direct and transparent. Secret discussions usually cause problems and may be lies. Let us be open to one another to avoid being misunderstood or information be misinterpreted. It gives opportunity to hear both sides of the story.

Bible parallel: Luke 8:17 *For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light.*

48. **Jiäk yöö tee wεc kεetde cuŋä.**

Swahili: Sio vyema kwa nchi kuweka fimbo ikiwa imeinuliwa.

French: Ce n'est pas bien pour un pays de mettre un bâton debout.

English: It is bad for a country to keep the stick raised.

Teaching: Dictatorship and high-handedness is not acceptable in a community or family because it is intimidation and threatening. People should be given a change to express their opinions, participate in community decisions and enjoy fair treatment by authorities.

Bible parallel: Matthew 20:25-28 *But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

49. **Jiäk ciɛŋ mī ruackε ke tak.**

Swahili: Jamii ambayo huongea bila heshima ni mbaya.

French: La famille qui parle sans respect est mauvaise.

English: The family who speaks without respect is bad.

Teaching: This proverb encourages all community or family members to respect each other, regardless of social and economic class or age. Respect earns respect and builds cohesion.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 2:17 *Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.*

50. **Kɔaŋ jakɛ määthdɛ kä yööŋ pöth.**

Swahili: Tembo huwafanya marafiki wafichue dosari zako.

French: L'éléphant fait que ses amis découvrent ses défauts.

English: Alcohol makes his friend to disclose his defects.

Teaching: It warns against uncontrolled use of alcohol. A drunk person speaks without thinking about the wisdom of his speech. It can lead to disclosure of secrets and disrespectful talk.

Bible parallel: Leviticus 10:9 *Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you, when you go into the tent of meeting, lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.*

51. **/Kɛn lony liw, bɛ yaŋ gɔaalä leni cam.**

Swahili: Simba hakufa, atamla ng'ombe kati ya ng'ombe wangu mara ingine.

French: Le lion n'est pas mort, il va pour la seconde fois, manger l'une de mes vaches.

English: The lion did not die (was not killed), it will eat a cow of my cattle once again.

Teaching: The proverb teaches that a person who makes a mistake should be dealt with and not ignored so that it is not repeated in future, by the same person or another. Not taking measures to correct the situation gives an opening for a repeat.

Bible parallel: Hebrews 12:11 *For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*

Hebrews 12:8 *If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.*

52. **/Kɛn lony liw, bɛ yaŋ gɔaalä leni cam.**

Swahili: Simba hakufa, atamla ng'ombe kati ya ng'ombe wangu mara ingine.

French: Le lion n'est pas mort, il va pour la seconde fois, manger l'une de mes vaches.

English: The lion did not die (was not killed), it will eat a cow of my cattle once again.

Teaching: It is used to encourage young men to look around the community for a bride so that they can marry and continue their family bloodline. Children come from a marriage and therefore it should be encouraged.

Bible parallel: Genesis 2:24 *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

53. **Kuäär ɛ thɔc jïäkni.**

Swahili: Kiongozi ni taka taka mbaya.

French: Un leader (leadership) est une mauvaise poubelle.

English: The leader (Leadership) is bad rubbish. (listens to any sort of bad things).

Teaching: A leader is a person who is open to different opinions and information from every member of the community or family without discrimination. Whether issues brought for his

attention are good or bad, acceptable or not, they are resolved. A strong and able leadership accommodates all and sundry.

Bible parallel: *1 Timothy 3:2-7 Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. ...*

54. **Kuäär ε tieep ruḡnwaḡ.**

Swahili: Kiongozi ni kama kivuli masaa ya asubuhi.

French: Un leader, c'est comme un ombre matinale.

English: The leader (leadership) is like a shade at the morning hours.

Teaching: A leader is a provider of comfort, confidence and hope. When people come for resolutions, they expect positive response and solutions. They have confidence and assurance.

Bible parallel: *Psalm 78:72 With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.*

55. **Kɔn diaal der.**

Swahili: Sote tuko sawa.

French: Nous sommes tous égaux.

English: We are all equal.

Teaching: The Nuer community hold the human value of equality in high esteem. All members of a community are treated equally without discrimination. They are created by one God and are one people, sharing similar community values and norms. This creates a special bond within the community.

Bible parallel: *Galatians 3:26-29 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

56. **Kuoth ε kuur.**

Swahili: Mungu ni mfundi.

French: Dieu est un artisan.

English: God is a craftsman.

Teaching: It teaches people to appreciate the abilities of God. Referred to as the creator of all things and is therefore, all powerful, making things happen as they do, such as seasons of drought and rain, human beings creation, war and peace in community.

Bible parallel: *Daniel 2:27 Daniel answered the king and said, "No wise men, enchanters, magicians, or astrologers can show to the king the mystery that the king has asked,*

57. **Laa Kuoth luḡke ke cap.**

Swahili: Mungu husaidia kila wakati kwa mipangilio mizuri.

French: Dieu aide chaque temps avec un bon plan.

English: God always helps with goodplanning.

Teaching: The proverb reminds the community that a person cannot work alone as a human being. God the Creator always guides to plan your present and future destinies. Man cannot control their destiny.

Bible parallel: Acts 16:9-10 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

58. **Latdi je ke yöö /ken nyan ji met cam.**

Swahili: Unasema hivyo kwa sababu mamba hajawahi kukuuma.

French: Tu dis que, puisque le crocodile ne te jamais piqué.

English: You say like that because the crocodile has never bitten you.

Teaching: The proverb is used as a warning against disregarding serious matters, and situations, especially when they have not befallen you. We should learn from the difficult challenges experienced by other people, so that when it comes our way, we can handle it successfully.

Bible parallel: James 2:4 *Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.*

59. **Maar lec /cie maar.**

Swahili: Uhusiano wa meno sio urafiki. Tabasamu haimaanishi urafiki.

French: La relation de dents, n'est pas l'amitié. Sourire ne veut pas dire l'amitié.

English: Relationship of the teeth is not friendship. Smile does not mean friendship.

Teaching: It is used as a warning about friendships. We should be careful with those we associate with because they may not be genuine and may not have good intentions. We should assess friends carefully before bonding with them.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 18:24 *A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.*

60. **Määth ke guan nãc me yän, tää ke diw.**

Swahili: Urafiki na Bwana Mjua-Yote ni makosa.

French: L'amitié avec Mr. le connaisseur, est une erreur.

English: Friendship with Mr. Know-All is a mistake.

Teaching: It is used to warn people against befriending people who always think they know everything, and have solutions for all problems. It is a bad trait. They will lead you into problems. We should avoid such people.

Bible parallel: 2 Corinthians 11:13-15 *For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

61. **Mi jali keel ke kuel dopi kuel.**

Swahili: Ukitembea pamoja na wezi utajifunza wizi.

French: Quand tu marches avec les voleurs, tu vas apprendre à voler.

English: If you walk together with thieves you learn theft.

Teaching: It warns against bad influences by others who are of unacceptable behaviour. We should choose to associate with people of good character because they influence us positively. Bad company turns us to bad people.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 22:24-25 *Make no friendship with a man given to anger, nor go with a wrathful man, lest you learn his ways and entangle yourself in a snare.*

62. **May yiëer ε diëw.**

Swahili: Uvuvi hauna uhakika.

French: La pêcheur n'a pas de certitudes.

English: Fishing is uncertain.

Teaching: It is used as a warning that no human being is hundred percent sure what their destiny and future holds for them. We can be scheme and plan effectively, but the outcome is unknown to us. Only God the Creator knows what our outcomes are. Even with resources and skills, businessmen, farmers, parents and all people are never sure of the future outcome. Nobody knows about tomorrow.

Bible parallel: Matthew 6:33-34 *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. "Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*

63. **Mar naath ε jic.**

Swahili: Urafiki huonekana kwa wakati wa tumbo.

French: L'amitié se montre lors de l'estomac.

English: Friendship is seen at the time of the stomach.

Teaching: The proverb teaches that people are friends but, we know about genuineness when tough times come. Some will only be friends when they can benefit themselves. When there are no rewards, they walk away. Selfish desires destroy friendships.

Bible parallel: 2 Timothy 3:2-4 *For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God,*

64. **Mi cī kun nen dōle kuɔɔt, tee yotde thiäkä.**

Swahili: Ukimwuona panya akimfanya paka kuwa mjinga, inamaanisha kwamba shimo liko karibu.

French: Lorsque tu voit une souris se blague du chat, cela signifie que le trou est à côté.

English: When you see a mouse make a fool of a cat, it means that its hole is near.

Teaching: This proverb teaches that it is important to have protection, and something to rely on in times of trouble, before making plans to undertake any endeavour. Our failure to obey the Law may lead us to jail, not following rules and norms in the community can lead us to being outcasts, we can also lose jobs or chance at school. We must have a place to fall back on.

Let us be responsible, show respect, and not undermine or take authority for granted any time.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 5:3 *Not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.*

Proverbs 11:14 *Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.*

65. **Mäth ni mäth in nyuth ji tuël.**

Swahili: Fanya urafiki na mtu anaye kukosoa.

French: Fait l'amitié avec quelqu'un qui te montre tes défauts.

English: Make friendship with the man who shows you disapproval.

Teaching: When a person is brave enough to correct our mistakes, regardless of our status in the community, it shows they respect us and wish to see us to change positively. Genuine people are most valuable to everyone. We should always speak out respectfully to correct others.

Bible parallel: Galatians 6:1 *Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted.*

66. **Mëë ε yän i jekä mut cu ηier γək päl.**

Swahili: Nikichukua mkuki, ng'ombe wataiacha nyasi iliyo na sumu.

French: Lorsque je prends la lance, la vache quitte les herbes poisonner.

English: When I get the spear, the cows will leave the poisonous grass.

Teaching: This proverb shows us that authority should be respected. We should accept to have authority in our communities, families, churches, schools and other areas. This helps to control issues and show direction, when situations are either good or bad. An authority must be in place to guide, control and lead. A spear traditionally is a sign of authority and leadership.

Bible parallel: John 8:31 *So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples"*

67. **Min pen ji niën tuok thare jin.**

Swahili: Kinacho kuzuia kupata usingizi hutoka ndani.

French: Ce qui te fait manquer le sommeil, vient dedans.

English: What prevents you from sleeping comes from within.

Teaching: This proverb reminds us we should realize that our problems are caused by self-created circumstances, people we associate with, or results of our own actions. We should be careful about those around us especially, because they may not mean well or may want you to fail. Be careful what you expose about yourself, and genuineness of your associates.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 27:6 *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; profuse are the kisses of an enemy.*

1 John 4:1 *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.*

68. **Maar määhä lenye maar diëth.**

Swahili: Urafiki ni bora kushinda uhusiano wa damu.

French: L'amitié est bonne que la relation du sang.

English: Friendship is better than blood relationship.

Teaching: This is a reminder that true friends can be more worthy than relatives. Sometimes relatives may not be reliable, but genuine friends care and support us in difficult times. We should value friendships.

Bible parallel: John 15:13 *Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.*

69. **Nyuään jake kak kä wä juol.**

Swahili: Uzembe hukifanya kipande cha shamba kupata magugumengi.

French: La paraisse fait le jardin soit herbeux.

English: Laziness makes the garden get plenty of weeds.

Teaching: It is a warning that failing to be active and not undertaking responsibilities causes failure to support oneself and others. We should positively use our skills and abilities to benefit ourselves and others in the family and community. Everyone has a role and owes it to the community. Laziness leads to poverty, hunger, unhappiness and poor health.

Bible parallel: 1 Timothy 5:8 *But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*

70. **Pual thar lenye pël thuck.**

Swahili: Kitendo cha haki ni bora kuliko maneno ya hekima.

French: Mieux-vaut une action ardente qu'une parole sage.

English: An earnest action is better than wise words.

Teaching: "Actions speak louder than words", so says a proverb. We are encouraged to act and not just talk. Even when we encourage others verbally, we should follow it with an action. Practical support for others is better than talking. In all situations it carries more positive effect for instance, giving food, clothing, medicine, water to the needy, not just praying and visiting them.

Bible parallel: James 2:18 *But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.*

71. **Pek ni mi dir jicdu.**

Swahili: Lenga kujaza tumbo lako.

French: Viser à remplir ton ventre.

English: Aim to fill your stomach.

Teaching: It reminds us that the main purpose of working hard every day is to achieve something that will benefit us. We should be able to have food to give us strength, meet other basic needs of life. When this is achieved, then we can invest in doing more for ourselves and for others, and saving for the future.

Bible parallel: Ephesians 4:28 *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*

72. **Riañ kuic ε ηak, kä buoth noone car.**

Swahili: Mali haijui chochote, lakini njaa hukupa fikira.

French: La richesse ne connait aucune chose, mais la faim te fait réfléchir.

English: Riches know nothing whereas famine offers a thought.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us that a person who has everything they need in life, may not think that wealth can finish. They may not save or create more, but can become spendthrift. When there is hunger and one has nothing in his/her possession, they begin seeking ways of getting their basic needs of life such as food, shelter and clothing. The experience of lacking gives you wisdom.

Bible parallel: 1 Timothy 6:17 *As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy.*

1 Timothy 6:10 *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.*

73. **Ruac lenye kqr.**

Swahili: Mazungumzo ya amani ni bora kuliko vita.

French: Mieux-vaut la reconciliation que la guerre.

English: Peace talks are better than fightings.

Teaching: Reconciliation and accepting each other as individuals, communities or nations, is the beginning of a unified society. Even in war and disagreements of all levels, we are encouraged to hold meetings and talks with one another because they bring understanding and clearance of the situation. Communication even in the worst circumstances brings positive resolutions.

Bible parallel: Matthew 5:9 *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.*

Hebrews 12:14 *Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.*

74. **Ram mi lät teth löcde, ku talaŋ le göri thuk naath.**

Swahili: Mtu anayefanya kazi hufurahia, lakini mvivu huwapa watu matatizo.

French: La personne qui travaille réjouit, mais le paresseux trouble les gens.

English: The man who works rejoices, whereas the lazy one gives troubles to people.

Teaching: This proverb discourages a person from depending on others. It encourages people to depend on themselves by working hard to achieve what they desire and need. When a people depends on others they become a burden because they expect a lot to be provided for them. It may not be possible, and it may lead to disagreements and bad relationships. One can be easily segregated by members of a community or family.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:11 *Whoever works his land will have plenty of bread, but he who follows worthless pursuits lacks sense.*

75. **Raan kuace rə ke röle.**

Swahili: Watu huzaana na kuongezeka nchini mwao.

French: Les gens se produisent et multiplient dans leur pays.

English: People are fruitful and multiply in their own country.

Teaching: A familiar ground is the best place to achieve your goals. In a community people are more comfortable because they belong. In foreign countries, values and cultures are different and it may take time for one to settle and achieve their goals. This encourages us to have a strong sense of belonging and focusing on building our community/country instead of

migrating. This is related to the continuous call for the African communities in exile to return to their countries.

Bible parallel: *Genesis 1:28 And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.*

76. **Raan ε yaŋ Kuoth.**

Swahili: Binadamu ni ng’ombe wa Mungu.

French: L’être humain est une vache de Dieu.

English: Person is the cow of God.

Teaching: The Nuer people honour the cow as the greatest sign of wealth and belonging to their community. A human being is likened to a cow because he/she is of high value in the community. A person is a provider of what God wants for the people. This is by nurturing family and community, partaking of all roles to provide for their needs and ensuring continuity of bloodlines and generations.

Bible parallel: *Malachi 3:10 Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.*

77. **Raan thare liqa.**

Swahili: Binadamu haogopi kifo.

French: L’être humain ne fuit pas la mort.

English: The human being is not afraid to die.

Teaching: Due to civil wars, the Nuer community was exposed to death of many of their people, such that it became a ‘regular’ matter. There was nothing special about death. Loss became part of their lives and they no longer feared to die. Human beings are expected to die by nature, but are usually afraid to lose their loved ones. It is nature’s way, that death should be accepted in our lives.

Bible parallel: *Matthew 10:28 And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.*

78. **Ram mi thiec duɔp, /cε dee bath.**

Swahili: Mtu anayeulizia njia hawezi kupotea.

French: La personne qui demande la direction, ne peut pas se perdre.

English: The person who asks directions will not get lost.

Teaching: This proverb encourages us to consult when we find it necessary. Nobody know everything, even the expert needs sometimes to seek advice and guidance from another. As the African proverb says “One sword sharpens the other.” We need each other achieve more in whatever we do.

Bible parallel: *John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.*

79. **Thile mī thiel tuk.**

Swahili: Hakuna kitu hakina sababu.

French: Aucune circonstance n’a pas sans cause.

English: Nothing is without a cause.

Teaching: Every happening and every action has its reason. Whatever we experience in life has a purpose. When a situation arises we should establish its origin and understand it. If it is a problem, we resolve it. Others may have repercussions we may need to handle. Never take things for granted. Find a basis for everything.

Bible parallel: 2 Peter 1:21 *For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

80. **Thiele mi bëë ke pek.**

Swahili: Hakuna kisicho fika mwisho.

French: Aucune chose n'a pas sa fin.

English: Nothing will not come to an end.

Teaching: Whatever has beginning comes to an end. Anything that we undertake to begin doing usually has to stop finally. This proverb is used to give hope in desperate situations when people feel that they have no solutions to problems. We should never forget that even problems come to an end. Situations and circumstances change; from bad to good or better. We should remain hopeful because time and our efforts can give us a better tomorrow.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it.*

81. **Tëk yian je ke ḡḡath.**

Swahili: Mgonjwa hurudisha uzima kwa kupewa huduma nzuri.

French: Le malade revient en vie par un bon soin.

English: The sick is brought to life by good care.

Teaching: The positivity and acceptability of our situation and environment, affect our state of mind and attitude. A person who is discouraged can develop hope when other people help them to build good self esteem and positivity towards all circumstances. This proverb teaches us the importance of giving support to those who are sad, sick, hungry or experiencing difficulties in their lives, to help their lives become bearable or even comfortable.

Bible parallel: 1 Corinthians 14:3 *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.*

82. **Tut thare lbc.**

Swahili: Wanaume wana mioyo shupavu.

French: Les hommes ont les cœurs courageux.

English: Men have brave hearts.

Teaching: The African man is required to be brave and strong hearted always. Cowardice is not welcome. This proverb is used as a reminder. They should be fighting enemies, guard the villages, protect their wealth and bear emotional burdens with a straight face. Circumcision tests this, and they bear the pain. They are encouraged to be strong for the members of the community and family.

Bible parallel: Psalm 35:1-28 *Of David. Contend, O LORD, with those who contend with me; fight against those who fight against me! Take hold of shield and buckler and rise for my help! Draw the spear and javelin against my pursuers! Say to my soul, "I am your salvation!" Let them be put to shame and dishonor who seek after my life! Let them be*

turned back and disappointed who devise evil against me! Let them be like chaff before the wind, with the angel of the LORD driving them away! ...

83. **Thile yow ram liee.**

Swahili: Hakuna binadamu wazuri kuliko wengine duniani.

French: Il n'y a pas de bons êtres humains que ceux d'autre monde.

English: There are no better people than others in the world.

Teaching: Equality is a universal value which calls for all people to be treated the same. All human beings are of equal value and have similar human weaknesses. We should therefore, not discriminate against anyone because of gender, race, colour, age, religion, political affiliation or any other character.

Bible parallel: Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,*

84. **Te ciëŋ ɔ ke ruacde kene miethde.**

Swahili: Kila jamii ina njia yao ya kuongea na kula.

French: Chaque communauté a sa façon de parler et manger.

English: Each family has its way of speaking and eating.

Teaching: This proverb informs us that each community and family have a unique way of doing things. We should appreciate their characteristics and norms which they have built for themselves over time and not try to change them, but accommodate them.

Bible parallel: James 4:17 *So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.*

85. **Thiele jic guan nyaal nuää.**

Swahili: Tumbo la baba wa msichana halipatwina maumivu ya njaa.

French: Le ventre du père d'une fille, ne sent pas la faim.

English: The stomach of the father of a girl does not suffer cramps.

Teaching: The African pride of having a daughter is the wealth it brings through brideswealth. When a daughter marries, her family becomes stable. Bridesweath is paid continuously in instalments through a lifetime, to maintain the bond between communities. It is also a sign of sustenance. When we invest in something valuable, then we sustain ourselves throughout life.

Bible parallel: Psalm 127:3-5 *Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.*

86. **Thiele jic guan nyaal nuää.**

Swahili: Tumbo la baba wa msichana halipatwina maumivu ya njaa.

French: Le ventre du père d'une fille, ne sent pas la faim.

English: The stomach of the father of a girl does not suffer cramps.

Teaching: This proverb signifies that a woman can be married into any community and, therefore, adopt the title of the new family. We should learn to adjust to fit into new situations and make the best of them. The sense of belonging is not just developed through blood ties, but by genuine and meaningful relationships that last.

Bible parallel: 1 Timothy 2:11-13 *Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve*

87. **Thile dit tuḡḡ.**

Swahili: Hakuna pembe kubwa, zote ni pembe.

French: Il n'y a pas une grande corne, elles les sont toutes.

English: There are not big horns, they are all horns.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us not to discriminate or judge something from the appearance. A cow with big horns is viewed as being strong and tough, and one with small horns as being weak. This may not be the case. The abilities of a person may not be judged by physical appearance or status. We should judge a person by their good character, positive attitude, and acceptable behaviour.

Bible parallel: Romans 12:6-8 *Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

88. **Thiik węc ε jike.**

Swahili: Mlangowa nchi ni watu wake.

French: La porte d'un pays, c'est son peuple.

English: The door to a country is its people.

Teaching: This saying teaches that the opinion we lead the outsider to make about us may define our future relationships in the community. We are judged by others usually according to our behaviour and attitude. Good citizens lead good investments and bilateral relations into their own country. Just like in a family, if judged as good, then many will want to associate with them.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 12:26 *One who is righteous is a guide to his neighbor, but the way of the wicked leads them astray.*

89. **Thile ram luḡḡ cuḡḡ.**

Swahili: Hakuna anayeweza kujisimamisha mwenyewe.

French: Personne peut se mettre debout par soi-même.

English: No one can stand by himself.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us the importance of unity and teamwork. When working or resolving a matter alone, one accomplishes little. When several people are united they gain much more. Togetherness creates unbreakable bonds, common goals and resolutions are made easily because many people contribute different ideas which lead to a better and quicker resolution. 'One finger cannot kill a flea'.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 *Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up! Again, if two lie together, they keep warm, but how can one keep warm alone? And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

90. **Te ram ɔ ke ter jaakɔ.**

Swahili: Kila binadamu huwa na udhaifu wake.

French: Chaque être humain, a sa faiblesse.

English: Each person has his flaws.

Teaching: Nobody is perfect. We all have one weakness or another. We should therefore accept ourselves and others, regardless of this. We should encourage people to accept these flaws and focus on the strengths which can be of more benefit to the individual and the community.

Bible parallel: 1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.*

91. **Thile ram yiëë ke wum raam min dɔŋ.**

Swahili: Hakuna anaye pumua na pua la mtu mwingine.

French: Personne ne respire pas par le nez d'une autre personne.

English: No one breathes with the nose of another person.

Teaching: This proverb teaches us the importance of depending on oneself, and building your independence. Depending on another person's property and services does not last forever. Problems begin when the provider discontinues the provision of these comforts. Providing for oneself helps to sustain the status and to satisfy needs.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 16:3 *Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established.*

92. **Thile wec mi leny wec.**

Swahili: Hakuna nchi nzuri zaidi ya ingine.

French: Pas un bon pays qu'un autre.

English: No country is better than another.

Teaching: Everyone believes their family or community or country is better than others. This proverb reminds us that this is not true. All communities are good, even the troubled ones, but all are unique in their own special way. This is because of the diversity of the people, language, culture, religion, politics and natural resources among other factors. The world is one big community, and we were all created by God.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 1:8 *See, I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their offspring after them.'*

93. **Tëk ε wale me, ε duɔɔp tëkä mi ruɔn ɔ.**

Swahili: Maisha ya leo kutengeneza njia ya kesho.

French: La vie d'aujourd'hui, c'est la préparation du chemin de demain.

English: Today's life makes the path for tomorrow.

Teaching: This proverb reminds us that whatever do in our daily lives, lays the foundation for the future. People should create friendships that last, create economic stability and stay healthy into old age. How we live today affects how we shall live in the future.

Bible parallel: James 4:13-14 *Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a*

little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that."

94. **Thile cuer wat.**

Swahili: Hakuna unafiki na mlafi.

French: Pas d'amitié avec un gloton.

English: There is not friendship in a glutton.

Teaching: Greedy people can never be genuine friends because they only consider themselves as being the first priority. Your needs can only be considered later. This proverb warns us not to expect to be treated fairly by a selfish person. They are not reliable, responsible or dependable. We should be careful relating with them.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 23:1-3 *When you sit down to eat with a ruler, observe carefully what is before you, and put a knife to your throat if you are given to appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for they are deceptive food.*

95. **Yaŋ ε duut.**

Swahili: Ng'ombe ni kama nyasi.

French: La vache est comme les herbes.

English: Cows are like grass.

Teaching: Grass very valuable but is seasonal. A cow is very valuable in the Nuer community. As a source of food and economy, a cow can be profitable today and not so tomorrow. It is a sign of wealth and pride, and requires protection against poacher, disease and any loss. Authority is firmly put in place to secure it, just like the grasslands which have to be protected to avoid being depleted by unauthorized persons. Our valuables should be protected well so that they sustain us.

Bible parallel: Exodus 14:14 *The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still.*

96. **Yil yiil jeke guande.**

Swahili: Shaka humpata mtu aliye sitasita

French: Doute prend une personne qui hésite.

English: Doubts catch the hesitant person.

Teaching: This proverb is used to warn people against being indecisive about anything. We should be firm in our decisions so that our lives do not stall at any time because of holding back decisions which help us to act about any situation. Being undecided causes confusion about your opinion, delays justice, fairness and progress into the future engagements.

'Do not be lukewarm – be cold or hot.'

Bible parallel: James 1:6-8 *But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*

97. **Yel gaaal thile mal.**

Swahili: Hamna amani ukila peke yako.

French: Pas de paix en mangeant seul.

English: There is no peace in eating alone.

Teaching: Sharing is one of the most respected values in the African community. Culture dictates that almost all things be done communally to maintain cohesion and sense of belonging. Several families lived in one homestead as one family. The proverb encourages us to share and collaborate with other people in all we do in the community and family. Individualism makes one lonely, segregated and not part of a team.

Bible parallel: Proverbs 19:17 *Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord, and he will repay him for his deed.*

98. **Yɔw ε luoc kā kuony.**

Swahili: Ardhi inayomaeneo ya juu na chini.

French: La terre a de hautes et basses places.

English: The land has high and low places.

Teaching: Life just like land cannot be smooth and easy always. We shall encounter challenges which we appreciate, deal with and move on with daily life. Hard times do not last, and should not prevent people from pursuing their goals in life.

Bible parallel: Ecclesiastes 3:1 *For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven:*

James 5:13 Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

99. **Wec ni ɣuēt.**

Swahili: Nchi ni vijana wake.

French: Un pays, c'est ses jeunes.

English: The country is its youth.

Teaching: Young people have a long life ahead of them, and are therefore, expected to carry on the endeavours expected by the community. They have the energy and time to establish themselves to benefit the community and found the future generation. A strong foundation in the youth creates a stable and productive community. Through marriage they are able to carry on bloodlines and build the population for the country.

Bible parallel: Deuteronomy 5:16 *Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.*

100. **Wɪc muɔɔn ɣuan ni yaak tin bit.**

Swahili: Duniani kuna fisi wengi wanaokaa kimya.

French: Dans le monde, il y a beaucoup d'hyènes qui sont en silence.

English: In the world there are many hyenas that keep quite.

Teaching: This proverb is used to warn people against being showy and being know-it-all. It is a reminder that there are others in the community who have better knowledge, skills, expertise and wisdom than them, but they are not arrogant. We should be humble and considerate so that people respect and appreciate us.

Bible parallel: 2 Chronicles 7:14 *If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.*

Summary

The collection of the Nuer proverbs was a special experience. The people I encountered were hospitable and sociable people, who provided a comfortable family environment. They lived with the extended members of the family – aunts, mother-in-law, brothers and sisters. They all wanted to be part of the job, all providing what knowledge they had – all feeling they knew the best about the collection. This led to a lot of laughter and sometimes criticism.

My collaborators are currently based in the city of Nairobi, Kenya and travel many times to the South Sudan. Most of their family members live in Nairobi too, which made our work easier. Although we would lose contact with them during their travels, we kept on working from wherever we were. They are a solid team who protect each other when times got rough. One day I witnessed a physical fight between two families – one protecting their own because their daughter had been dishonoured by a young man from the other. The local Chief had to come and reconcile the two families. They protect their own without hesitation – it is admirable. They respect the women and escort them to wherever they wish to go, to ensure their safety.

I find myself mesmerized by their dark skin colour and height. They stand out among everyone else. They will continue being my friends.

Conclusion

The Nuer community satisfactorily fulfills the duty of imparting moral knowledge to its members, making them aware of the moral values and principles in that community. Proverbs and wise sayings are used to teach social and moral virtues such as equality, inclusiveness, fairness, hospitality, generosity, concern for others, and communal feeling. **Hospitality and generosity** are ancient universal customs and in the Nuer community are an expression of the perception of being tied to the upholding of **good morals** in the community. Proverb No.28 “/Ca wääth kuän mal jek.” - A violent man doesn't easily find food. The proverb warns against people having unfriendly, disrespectful and unacceptable behaviours which are not beneficial to the community. Because of such behaviours, a person becomes segregated by others and is not assisted by others. We should therefore, ensure we have acceptable behaviours to build ourselves and others, and for acceptability in the community.

Peace is a universal moral standard. It would be ideal to resolve all forms of disagreements and conflicts in the world through negotiations. Proverb No.72. “Ruac lenye kor.” - Peace talks are better than fightings. This proverb encourages **Reconciliation** and accepting each other as individuals, communities or nations, is the beginning of a unified society. Even in war and disagreements of all levels, we are encouraged to hold meetings and talks with one another because they bring understanding and clarence of the situation. Communication even in the worst circumstances brings positive resolutions.

Basically all human beings are of the same physical and mental nature, have similar basic human needs and virtues. They share the same human weaknesses, vices, and all have the basic potential to experience love and happiness.

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APPENDIX

A RESEARCH PROPOSAL FOR THE COLLECTION OF 100 NUER (THIANG) PROVERBS AND WISE SAYINGS OF SOUTH SUDAN

By Margaret Wambere

INTRODUCTION

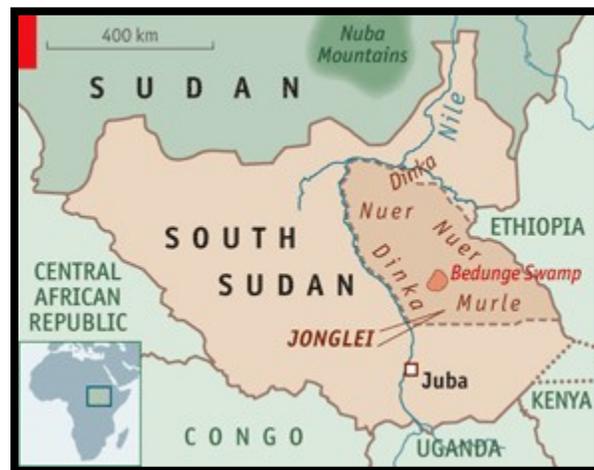
Location

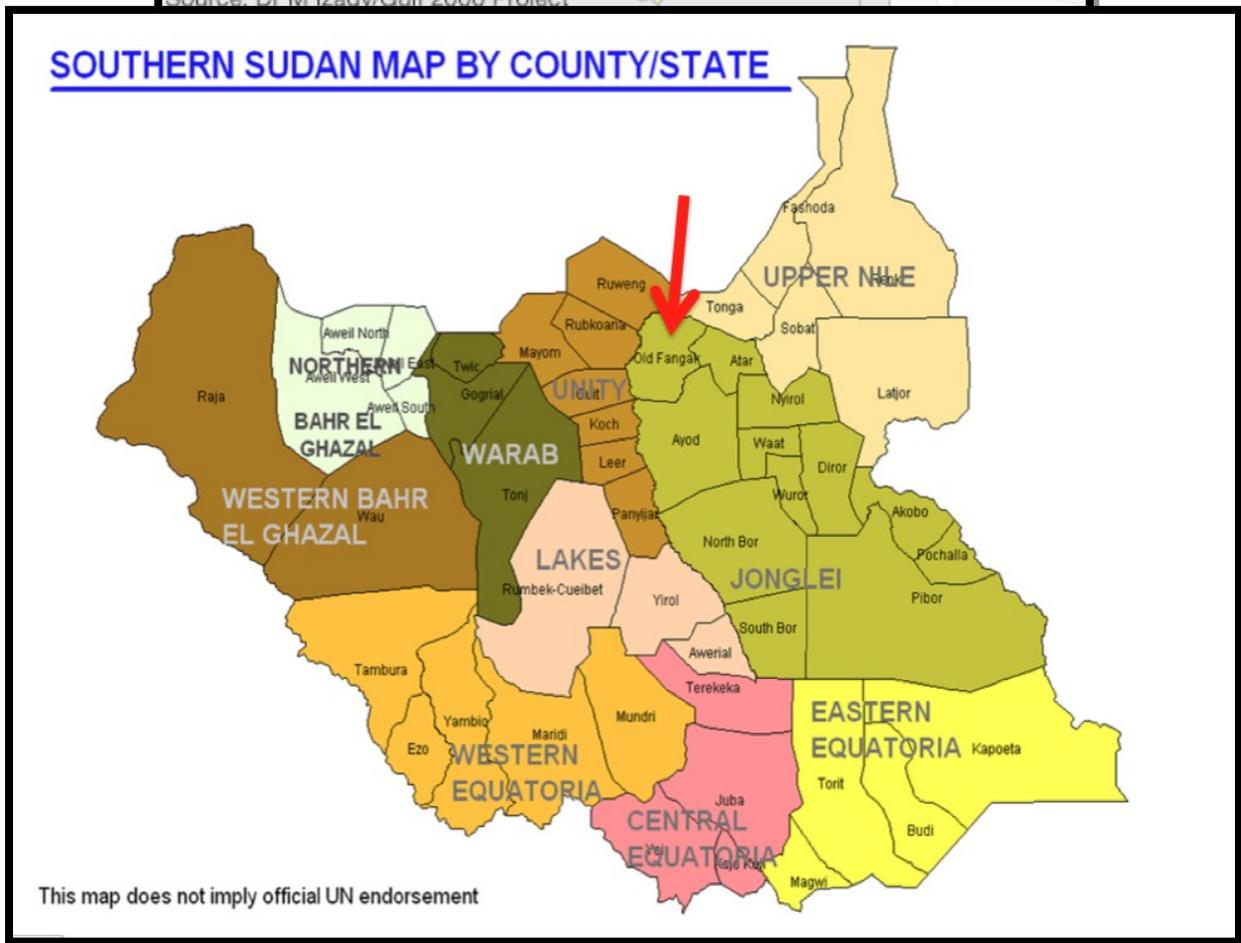
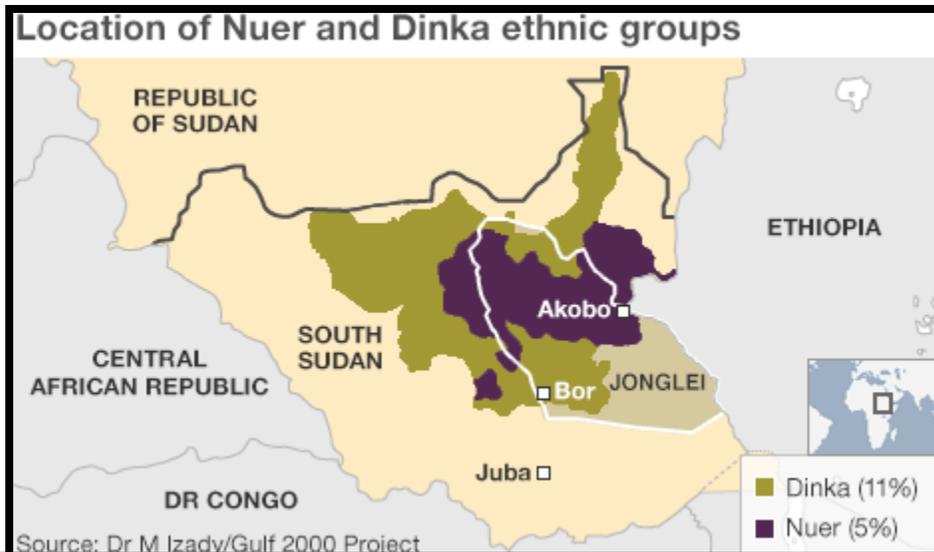
The **Nuer** people are a Nilotic ethnic group primarily inhabiting the Nile Valley. They are concentrated in South Sudan, with some also found in south-western Ethiopia. They speak the **Nuer** language, which is an Eastern Sudanic language of the Nilo-Saharan language family. The Nuer refer to themselves not as Nuer, but as Naadh/ Naath, meaning "human beings."

The Nuer occupy mainly the Jonglei State, north of a Jonglei–Pibor, Unity State, south of Bentin town; Upper Nile State, Baliet, Ulang, and Lukapin/Nasir counties; the border areas in Lakes, Warab, and Northern Bahr el Ghazal states. This region has swamps and open savanna on both sides of the Nile River, south of its junction with the Sobat and Bahr-al-Ghazal, and along both banks of those tributaries. The Nuer territory lies approximately 500 miles (800 kilometers) south of Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. It has been suggested that the Nuer, along with other Nilotic groups, settled in the region around the fourteenth century. While here they acquired their techniques for animal domestication. When other groups migrated southward in search of more elevated terrain to avoid floods, the Nuer stayed where they were.

Oral traditions indicate that the Nuer moved east of the Nile River only during the last 200 years. They began an especially active migration about the mid 1800s. as they moved gradually east, they pushed the Anuak farther east into Ethiopia. During this period many Dinka people were incorporated into the Nuer community. Atuot and Nuer traditions indicate similarity of origin with the Dinka.

The Ethnographical Location of the Nuer in South Sudan





The ethnographic location of the Old Fangak County in South Sudan

There are several main dialects of Nuer such as Jikany, Abigar, Cien, Thognaath, Lou, Nyuong, Thiang, Dor (Door), Laak, Leik, Bul and Jagai. According to the government census in 2013 the Nuer population was estimated at approximately 1.8 million people, representing 15.6% of the

population. It is the second largest ethnic group in the South Sudan. The Nuer language is similar to that of the neighboring Dinka and Atuot. They border other ethnic groups such as the Dinka, Anyuak, Atwot and Shilluk. My collection of 100 proverbs will be from the Thiang Nuer of the Old Fangak County of South Sudan.

Myths of Origin

Nuers believe in the coming of God through rain, lightning and thunder, and that the rainbow is the necklace of God. The sun and the moon as well as other material entities are also manifestation or sign of God, who after all is a spirit.

The Nuer Language

The Nuer Language uses a modified version of Latin script for their Written language. The writing system was adopted in 1928 with minor changes being added over the history of the language. Although there are several dialects, they all have one written standard. The Nuer language is used in churches and is also taught in primary schools.

The differences among Nuer dialects are so small that separate written forms are not justified. The finalized Nuer alphabet consists of characters which are equivalent to the phonemes of the Nuer language; that is, the perceptually distinct units of sound in the language, that distinguish one word from another, for example *p*, *b*, *d*, and *t* in the English words *pad*, *pat*, *bad*, and *bat*

However the complete alphabet of the Nuer language uses 39 distinct letters, shown below in capitals and lowercase styles.

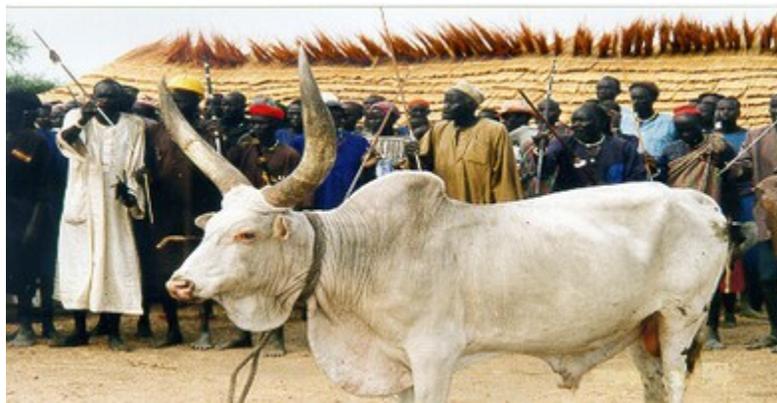
| CAPITALS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|
| A | Ä | Ä | B | C | D | Dh | E | E | Ë | ε | ε | Ë | G | Υ | H | I | I | J | |
| K | L | M | N | Ḑ | Nh | Ny | O | Ḑ | Ö | Ḑ | Ḑ | P | R | T | Th | U | W | Y | Š |
| LOWER CASE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| A | a | ä | b | c | D | dh | e | e | ë | ε | ε | ë | g | υ | h | i | i | j | |
| k | l | m | n | ḑ | nh | ny | o | ḑ | ö | ḑ | ḑ | p | r | t | th | u | w | y | š |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Social Structure and Culture

The Nuer are patrilineal, but people are considered to be related equally to their kin through both the mother's and the father's sides. Thus, descent can be best described as cognatic. The Nuer people consider kinship the most important basis of social organization. People determine

whether they are related by their clan names. The members of a clan share a totem and believe in their descent from that totem. It is also on the basis of clan membership that strong marriages are established and enforced. Children have to learn kinship terminology at a very young age and apply it strictly in their daily interactions with adult relatives. It is the means by which individuals express respect for one another. Those who do not share an age set cannot address one another by their first names.

Marriage and family are the most fundamental institutions and are a universal goal. Polygynous marriages are common. Marriages of members of any local group are usually the best way of creating links through women between persons from different communities. The Nuer consider that if any relationship can be traced between a man and a woman through the mother or father, marriage should not take place between those persons. After the male initiation ceremony, a young man takes on the full privileges and obligations of manhood in work, war, and play. Courtship and cattle become a young man's major interests. When a Nuer man is ready to marry, he identifies his intended bride. Once the family has reached an agreement, the elders visit the woman's family to announce their intention and discuss the number of cattle to be paid in bride-wealth. The marriage is brought about by the payment of cattle, and every phase of the ritual is marked by the transfer or slaughter of cattle. Grounds for divorce are limited. A woman's failure to conceive is one of them. Since marriages involve the exchange of property, which is often contributed by different members of the extended family, individuals are not free to terminate marriages. Decisions regarding divorce are usually subjected to the scrutiny of both sides before they are finalized.



Nuer cow during a ceremony

Cattle play an important role in rituals. Nuer institutions, customs, and social behavior are directly related to cattle. They are always talking about their animals, and cattle are involved in their folklore, marriage practices, religious ceremonies, and relations with neighbors.

Riddles involve word play and are especially popular with children. Proverbs and wise sayings convey important messages and are often used when members of the community settle disputes or advice youths and children. Folklore and songs help to reach the messages especially to the young who may not understand messages easily.

EXAMPLES OF NUER PROVERB

1. Tëk ε wale me, ε duɔɔp tëkã mĩ ruɔn ɔ.

Swahili: Maisha ya leo kutengeneza njia ya kesho.

French: La vie d'aujourd'hui, c'est la préparation du chemin de demain.

English: Today's life makes the path for tomorrow.

Teaching: This proverb reminds us that whatever we do in our daily lives, lays the foundation for the future. People should create friendships that last, create economic stability and stay healthy into old age. How we live today affects how we shall live in the future.

2. Thile ɔw ram liε.

Swahili: Hakuna binadamu wazuri kuliko wengine duniani.

French: Il n'y a pas de bons êtres humains que ceux d'autre monde.

English: There are no better people than others in the world.

Teaching: Equality is a universal value which calls for all people to be treated the same. All human beings are of equal value and have similar human weaknesses. We should therefore, not discriminate against anyone because of gender, race, colour, age, religion, political affiliation or any other character.

In socialization, children are cared for by both of their parents, grandparents, and older siblings or any other relatives willing to do so. Boys usually identify with their fathers and are generally engaged in many tasks concerning cattle, taking responsibilities for work, war, and also serving the adults at the cattle camp. Girls are expected to identify with their mothers, who teach them about women's roles.

The Nuer engage in elaborate social and religious ceremonies. Dancing and singing are crucial forms of entertainment, and dances give young people an opportunity to interact and court. Although the Nuer do not conduct elaborate burial ceremonies, the death of a spiritual leader is always marked by a huge celebration in which cattle camps gather and young men engage in mock battles, sing to their favorite oxen, and feast.



A Nuer youth performs a traditional victory dance

The division of labor is similar to that of the neighboring groups. In general, certain tasks are regarded as being for women and others as being for men, but there is a great deal of flexibility. Women's work tends to take place around the homestead or the village. It includes farming, food preparation, and care for the young and the very old. Men's work takes them farther from home, since it involves looking after cattle. Both men and women plant crops. Women weed, thresh the grain, store and pound it into flour, and prepare meals. Men do the harvesting and graze the livestock far afield. Women, girls, and uninitiated boys milk the livestock. Construction of houses is generally shared. Men build the walls, cut and transport timber, and put up the frame, and both men and women thatch the grass roofs. The only areas of rigid gender division of labor are milking the cows and cooking. Initiated men never, under ordinary circumstances, cook or milk cows.

In their villages, the Nuer build huts with round mud walls and conical grass thatched roofs that are windowless and have small doors that force people to crawl into their homes. The Nuer spend long hours engaging in body beautification practices such as painting the body with cow dung ash mixed with cow urine. Hairstyling is another time-consuming endeavor. The Nuer receive facial markings (called *gaar*) as part of their initiation into adulthood. The pattern of Nuer scarification varies within specific sub-groups. The most common initiation pattern among males consists of six parallel horizontal lines which are cut across the forehead with a razor, often with a dip in the lines above the nose. Dotted patterns are also common especially among the Bul Nuer and among females.



A Nuer man with traditional scarring

Although biochemical medicines are available and the Nuer believe in their efficacy, traditional therapeutic medicine is still highly regarded. It is sometimes the only medical system available because of war. The therapeutic techniques used among the Nuer include various kinds of surgery, dispensing medicinal plants, and bone setting. These are all techniques that can be passed between the generations. Diviners and other practitioners whose skills are "god-given" practice healing methods and are believed to diagnose by communicating with the supernatural world. However, recently there has been a rise in the understanding and use of modern medicine.

The Nuer are organized around clans and lineages, with the lineage being a smaller segment of the clan. A clan has a headman. Several headmen are appointed as government sub-chiefs and serve under an executive chief. Group size can change according to political circumstances. For example, many clans may form a descent group or kinship group, and reside together if there is a need for collective defense and then break apart when that need ceases to exist.

Land is communally owned. Individuals can take, tame, and use as much land as their labor capacity allows, and this continual use entitles people to land. If they move away, it can be taken over by others. When a household moves, it may demand payment from the next occupants as remuneration for the labor expended in taming it and for any dwelling structures that may be usable. The only land that is contested is the grazing plains. However, the actual grasslands are not

restricted to any group, although the elevated camps where the people reside are assigned according to lineage.

Religion

Although large numbers of Nuer converted to Christianity at the end of the twentieth century, the majority remain followers of traditional religions whose central tenet is the worship of a high god through the totem, ancestral spirits, and a number of deities. The high god is called *Kuoth* and is the source of life; below *Kuoth* is a host of earth deities. They are believed to watch over the living, reward good behavior, and punish wrongdoing. They function as mediators between the dead and the living. Cattle and other types of livestock, such as goats and sheep, have a special position in religious ceremonies. Animals are sacrificed to treat illness; as a way of praying for rain, fertility, and a good crop yield; and to appease the ancestors. The Nuer believe that a cow should not be slaughtered except as a sacrifice to God, the spirits, and the ancestors.

All these practices were a source of misunderstanding between the Nuer and Christian missionaries, who initially believed that the Nuer people were worshiping idols. However, as a result of the religious conflict between the north and the south of Sudan, Christianity has grown steadily among the Nuer. The practices of traditional religious leaders have been regarded as complemented by Christianity, and there is no conflict between Christianity and traditional religion. However, the Nuer people believe that there is a contradiction between their traditional beliefs and Islam.

Economy

Nuerland is in the swamps of the upper Nile, and villages are grouped according to the lineage system into the few elevated areas. Because of the environment, the Nuer engage in a nearly constant movement between the cattle camps of the dry season and villages in the few mildly elevated parts of the territory where they grow millet. The Nuer economy is based on a combination of cattle herding, horticulture, fishing, and collecting wild foods.

Cattle are the Nuer's most cherished possession, an essential food supply as well as the most important social asset. Cattle represent the Nuer's social, cultural, and economic security. Almost every Nuer cultural practice and social activity relates to livestock. Their movement is dictated by *tot* and *mai*, the two seasons, which are characterized by rain and drought, respectively. Much of Nuerland is flooded during the rainy season between April and October, and this has caused the shifting of villages. During the dry season between November and March, resources become limited and most members of the family are sent to the cattle camp..

The successive governments in Khartoum have mandated that cattle in all Nilotic areas be incorporated into the state economy. Taxation was one method for achieving that aim. Requiring the Nuer to pay taxes in cash in a cashless economy where paid labor did not exist ensured that the Nuer would have to sell their cattle. The effort by the north to commercialize Nuer cattle has historically caused the Nuer to challenge the government, including their participation in the current war. The government's efforts to commercialize their cattle has been seen as an assault on their identity.

Recently, the Nuer have engaged in trading as a source of subsistence. Wild foods are abundant during certain times of the year throughout Nuerland. Recent famines, displacement, and loss of assets because of the war have forced the Nuer to make gathering wild foods, trading, and fishing important components of their economy. Besides grain and dried fish, the Nuer do not have non-perishable food items that can be stored for extended periods. The goal of economic activity is to satisfy immediate dietary needs rather than to accumulate wealth. When a household can harvest surplus grain, it converts the proceeds into cattle.

The soil is black cotton soil that maintains its fertility at all times. People may use slash and burn horticulture if soil becomes eroded, which is rare. The main crops are millet (sorghum), maize, and vegetables. Agriculture is typically a horticultural activity in that the Nuer rotate crops and their tools are rudimentary ones, such as the hoe. New tools have been introduced by relief aid agencies to help displaced persons reestablish their livelihoods. The area of land that a household cultivates varies according its labor force. On average a Nuer household grows two acres. When crops fail in one area because of floods or drought, grains can be purchased from areas of surplus within Nuerland or in the towns where Arab traders keep shops.

The Nuer produce a variety of functional items, including clay pots, mats, decorated gourds used as eating utensils, and baskets. Sewing papyrus into smooth mats is a painstaking industrial art. Mats are the basic form of bedding.

Political structure

The people are led by headmen, sub-chiefs, executive chiefs, and paramount chiefs. These are all politicized positions that emerged after the establishment of the nation. Traditionally, Nuer political and administrative structure relied on community elders who enforced norms and regulations through respect and fear.



Nuer warriors demonstrating a cultural practice, aimed to highlight

how men could tactfully fight off an enemy.

Political History

The Nuer became part of the Sudanese politics in the 1820s, when the nation-state was taking shape, beginning with the Ottoman invasion from Egypt in 1821. Their incorporation began with the slave trade. Like the other South Sudanese groups, the Nuer have resisted incorporation into the Sudanese political structure. This resistance led to the development of two distinct parts of the country: the North and the South. Northerners self-identify as Arabs and are Muslim, while Southerners identify themselves as black, African, and Christian.

South Sudan gained independence from Sudan on 9 July 2011 as the outcome of a 2005 agreement that ended Africa's longest-running civil war. Made up of the 10 southern-most states of Sudan, South Sudan is one of the most diverse countries in Africa.

Two civil wars ensued, continuing into the beginning of the twenty-first century. Nuer participation in these wars has two sources. The first is resistance to the authority of the Khartoum government, which keeps them Sudanese when they wanted a secession. The other is cultural differences such as Islamic beliefs in the north, versus the Christianity and traditional religions in the south. The grazing plains of the Upper Nile have been a major cause of conflict between the Nuer, the Dinka and the different sub-groups of Nuer. The conflict has been based on a cycle of war and reconciliation because of cattle rustling or theft. Recent oil exploration and development caused more villages to be destroyed since 1998 to create a secure buffer zone and make room for foreign oil companies, and forcing displaced populations to move from place to place.

There is a myth in which the two groups are represented as two sons of God, who promised his old cow to Dinka and its calf to Nuer. One night Dinka came and took the calf from God by imitating the voice of Nuer. When God realized that he had been cheated, he became angry and charged Nuer to avenge that act by endlessly raiding Dinka's cattle. Today the Nuer raid cattle and seize them openly by force of arms.

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WRITING OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are:

1. To collect a hundred proverbs and wise sayings from the Nuer (Thiang) ethnic group.
2. To translate these proverbs and wise sayings into English for other literate people to be wiser.
3. To help people to enrich their communication skills by using these proverbs and wise sayings from the Nuer (Thiang) people.
4. To facilitate religious teachings using them, and show the relationship to the locally understood sayings and proverbs.

METHODOLOGY

The writer will interview Nuer elders and collaborators, and other people with good understanding of the proverbs and wise sayings. He will record them for translation into Kiswahili, English and French, and publish 10 booklets.

BUDGET

Expenses

| | |
|---------------------|---------------|
| Typing and printing | \$200 |
| Binding | \$ 80 |
| Transport | \$100 |
| Miscellaneous | \$120 |
| TOTAL | \$ 500 |