

## **Ndlie-jia is tricked into divorcing Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang.**

*Told by Yang Xiu-gong.*

They tell a story that once when Ndlie-jia went fishing he caught a small fish. He no longer had any parents, so that when he reached home and his fire had gone out, he just put the fish down on the pillow of his bed while he went to get fire. When he returned home he saw a bride sitting on his bed. He did not like to go and look on the pillow so he went back and forth but could not see the fish. Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang said, "What are you looking for?" Ndlie-jia replied, "I am not looking for anything!" Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang said, "You are looking for your small fish. It is I, and if you do not believe me look under my arms!" He looked and saw under Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang's arms there were the fins of a fish. So he stopped looking.

When evening came Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang said, "Ndlie-jia, prepare the supper". Ndlie-jia said, "I have nothing for supper". Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang took her thimble, broke off one piece and made a pot, broke off another piece and made a steamer, and broke off a third piece and made food, which she served for Ndlie-jia to eat. From that time, for Ndlie-jia, each day was better than the last, and his livestock more numerous each day than the last.

On one occasion Ndlie-jia's two cousins tricked him saying, "Ndlie-jia, your wife has leprosy, and if you don't believe it, you make her take off her leg-bands, and you look. She has got leprosy all right. You divorce her and come and marry us!" Ndlie-jia did as they said. He made his wife take off her leg-bands for him to look. He saw the rings on his wife's legs and concluded that she had leprosy, so he decided to divorce her.

He took his wife to the river where he used to go fishing and arrived at the same pool. His wife said, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?" Ndlie-jia said, "It is". So his wife waded in several steps and said, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?" Ndlie-jia said, "A man can speak but one word only!" His wife waded in waist deep and said, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?" Ndlie-jia replied, "A man can speak but one word only!" Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang waded in neck deep and said, "Is it true?" Ndlie-jia said "It is". So Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang disappeared down into the water pool. Ndlie-jia's livestock from the coombs and valleys came jumping to follow Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang into the water pool. Ndlie-jia tore down creepers and tied up the sheep and tied up the goats, but the sheep and the goats jumped around three times, the creepers snapped and they jumped away to follow Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang. Now the twisting of the horns of sheep and goats is the result of this.

Ndlie-jia returned with the intention of marrying his two cousins, but his two cousins said, "We were only joking with you!" Now there was nothing he could do. Every day he went searching along the bank of the river. He met a toad who asked him, "What are you doing?" Ndlie-jia said, "I brought Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang to this river and divorced her, now I have come back to look for her". The toad said, "Do not worry, I will go with you and drink the water of the pool, then you may go and bring her back". The toad went and drank the water of the pool and revealed Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang. Ndlie-jia was delighted and Ndlie-jia smiled, but the toad's stomach burst and the pool filled up again. Ndlie-jia took the toad home and healed him, and then took him back to drink the water. This time the toad drank up the water in the pool and Ndlie-jia went and said to Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang, "I have come to take you back". Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang replied, "I

cannot go with you, but now I will cut off some wide, white cloth for you to wear on your head as a sign, and from now on you will search for me all along the river course from its mouth to its source”.

So now when we see the ndlie-jia bird flying along the river, this is the reason.