

Ndlie-jia and Nggurajio-ni-bang. (1)*Collected by Wang Ming-ji.*

Ndlie-jia took copper and beat it into a hook
 And Ndlie-jia went fishing.
 Ndlie-jia caught a small silver fish,
 Which he carried home and placed upon the bed.

5 The silver snake-fish changed,
 Changed into a wife for Ndlie-jia,
 Nggurajio-ni-bang. She spoke,

“Make a store, Ndlie-jia!”

“If I make a store, there is no grain”.

10 “Build a house, Ndlie-jia!”

“If I build a house, there are no cattle”.

This year we may know,
 Nggurajio-ni-bang has brought,
 Brought Ndlie-jia to ask for breeding stock,
 15 To ask for breeding stock from Nggurajio-ni-bang’s father.

Nggurajio-ni-bang spoke,
 Spoke to Ndlie-jia and said,
 “When you go do not ask for breeding cattle.
 Even if my father offers you breeding horses,
 20 You must not ask for breeding horses.

Let Ndlie-jia ask for my father’s ‘silken-rat, his rat of silk’”
 So Nggurajio-ni-bang’s father gave,
 Gave his ‘silken rat, his rat of silk’ to Ndlie-jia.
 Ndlie-jia having received it returned and reached,
 25 Reached the end of the road.

Though Ndlie-jia had built no house,
 There were cattle and pigs of all colours to fill a house.
 Though Ndlie-jia had made no store,
 There was grain enough to fill a store.

30 This year we may know,
 Know that the Master is worshipping the spirits.
 So Ndlie-jia rode,
 Rode his stallion and went to watch.

The Master’s daughter Nggugu did no good,
 35 Telling Ndlie-jia, as though it were true and believable,
 And saying that Nggurajio-ni-bang had leprosy.

Then Ndlie-jia returned and reached,

Reached Ndlie-jia's house.
 Urgently Ndlie-jia reproached Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang
 40 Urgently he led her out to divorce her.

Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang waded in up to the knees.
 Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang spoke, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?"
 Ndlie-jia replied, "A man has but one word!"

Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang waded in up to the waist.
 45 Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang spoke, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?"
 Ndlie-jia replied, "A man may curse!"

Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang waded in up to the neck.
 Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang spoke, "Is it true, Ndlie-jia?"
 Ndlie-jia replied, "A man has but one word!"
 50 So Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang waded in and disappeared.

As Ndlie-jia returned he met,
 Met Ndlie-jia's stallion.
 Ndlie-jia jumped to catch it,
 To catch Ndlie-jia's stallion,
 55 But the stallion changed into a dragonfly.

Then Ndlie-jia met,
 Met Ndlie-jia's sheep and goats following,
 Following after Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang.

So Ndlie-jia jumped to catch,
 60 To catch Ndlie-jia's goats by the horns,
 And the goats' horns twisted three times.

Ndlie-jia came and reached his house.
 Ndlie-jia would go and marry the Master's daughter Ngggu-gu,
 But the Master's daughter Ngggu-gu just spat,
 65 Spat white spittle on Ndlie-jia's mouth.

So Ndlie-jia returned and remained,
 Ndlie-jia would go and marry the Master's daughter Ngggu-gu to form a family
 and dwell .
 But the Master's daughter Ngggu-gu just spat,
 Spat white spittle on Ndlie-jia's head.

70 "Ndlie-jia is not good enough to gather firing for the Master's daughter Ngggu-
 gu!"
 So Ndlie-jia returned and remained.

Ndlie-jia went in search,
 Seeking for Ngggu-ra-jio-ni-bang each day,
 And Ndlie-jia met,
 75 Met the toad out along the road.

The toad was kith,

And Ndlie-jia kin,
And the toad came and drank,
Gradually drank the water from the pool,
80 Until the hem of Nggu-ra-jio-ni-bang's skirt was revealed.

Ndlie-jia smiled and laughed in his heart,
But the toad's belly burst,
And the silver water of the pool came bubbling back.

Nggu-ra-jio-ni-bang wove a piece of new cloth,
85 And put it on the top of a rock,
For Ndlie-jia to wear on his head and become,
Become a wild bird flying to and fro in search,
Seeking Nggu-ra-jio-ni-bang every day.

Thus it is ended.