

THE POOR MAN AND THE BUZZARD

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This text narrated by Octaviano Ruíz is in the dialect of Mixteco spoken in Santa María Peñoles, Etna, Oaxaca. The text was recorded on magnetic tape in 1960 and was transcribed in its present form with some minor revisions suggested by Vicente López, another Mixteco informant.

The story as told by Octaviano is one of two stories told to him by his grandfather about poor men who became rich. These stories reveal the aspirations of every Mixteco to rise out of poverty and possess those things that are the sign of prosperity: a variety of domestic animals and an abundant supply of corn.

In this story the poor man is at the point of suicide, by going to sleep and falling into a deep gorge, when a buzzard comes along and takes him to heaven. He works in heaven for seven years and at the end of that time returns on the back of the buzzard to the place where it found him. The poor man returns to his home, follows the instructions given to him by God, and miraculously becomes rich.

TEXT

1. $\lambda^{\text{a}}\lambda^{\text{a}}$ històriā ndéé sà-nà?à bì?T nìkācī ndìi šíi-ì-ì.
2. Nìkānī ndìi k^wèndū. 3. Nìšíndèkù $\lambda^{\text{a}}\lambda^{\text{a}}$ tée ndà?ū.

LITERAL TRANSLATION

1. One story to thing long-ago very said dead grandfather my.
2. Told dead-one story. 3. Was one man poor. 4. Poor completely

FREE TRANSLATION

1. My late grandfather told me a very old story. 2. He told me a story.
3. There was a poor man. 4. He was extremely poor. 5. He had no animals.

4. Ndà²ū ndā¹λ¹ -dé. 5. Ñà-túú kl¹tā¹-dé. 6. Ñà-túú ndā¹kūtù-dè. 7. Nà-túú mbèé-dèū. 8. Ñà-túú k¹āžū-dé. 9. Ñà-túú inā-dé. 10. Ñà-túú nì njūšī'-dè. 11. Ndà²ū ndā¹λ¹-dé, 12. žìkà k¹āā' žìkà túú ndāā ndékú-dè-. 13. Dìkò ndékū dé²è-dé. 14. Tā¹nā¹ dé²è-dé ndékū'. 15. Ndékū' ñādā¹λ¹-dé ndékū'. 16. Tèè ñā-nì¹-dé kàšì-k¹è-šì. 17. Sói-ní dīkō dū²à sàkòò-k¹è-šì ndā¹λ¹ nānā-k¹è-šì. 18. K¹ā²ā-dé žùkù tèè ndèšìò-dé. 19. K¹ā²ā-dé tèè ndèšìò-dé. 20. Tèè ñà-túú tnā¹ nìxóò-dè- kàšì ndā¹-ñā-dé- šìì-k¹è-šì. 21. Tèè ñā-kú-ndèè' inì-k¹è-šì kèè-dé kā¹λ¹ dé tūkù nūū ñū²ū' inì ñā¹á-k¹è-šī'. 22. Tèè ā¹λ¹-ná ndūū k¹ā²ā-dé. 23. Níkèšìò-dé λ¹ā¹ žù²ū dè²bá kùnū. 24. šī¹ā-nì sàkòò-dé žù²ū dè²bá.

he. 5. Not be animal(s) his. 6. Not be ox(en) his. 7. Not be sheep his. 8. Not be horse(s) his. 9. Not be dog(s) his. 10. Not be even chicken(s) his. 11. Poor completely he, 12. barely late barely appear dawn be he. 13. But be child(ren) his. 14. Many child(ren) his be. 15. Be wife his be. 16. And not find he will-eat plural child. 17. Much definitely thus sit plural child with mother plural child. 18. Goes he mountain. 19. Goes he and returns he. 20. And not be nothing continuously found he eat with person he to plural child. 21. And not be strong heart plural child will-go-out he will-go he also in that contain heart person plural child.

22. And one indefinite day goes he. 23. Arrived he one edge gorge deep. 24. There definite sit he edge gorge. 25. Wants he that will-take-hold person sleep to him will-sleep he and will-roll over he there

6. He had no oxen. 7. He had no sheep. 8. He had no horses. 9. He had no dogs. 10. He did not even have chickens. 11. He was extremely poor. 12. He barely existed from one day to the next. 13. But he had children. 14. He had many children. 15. He had a wife. 16. He did not find anything for them to eat. 17. So they were just with their mother. 18. He would go to the mountain and return. 19. He would go and come. 20. He would find nothing for him and his children to eat. 21. The children could not endure his leaving once for all because they thought much of him.

22. One day he left. 23. He arrived at the edge of a deep gorge. 24. There at the edge of the gorge he sat down. 25. He wanted to fall asleep so that he would topple over and fall down into the gorge and die. 26. He sat and sat

25. K^wini-dé sáá t^lá^láⁿ ñà[?]á' sānī šil-dé kúdú-dé tèè šòò t^láⁿkábà-dé šíjá ngāu nī[?]nù-dé dé[?]bá-à- kùu-dé níkuū'.
 26. Tèè nùkòò nùkòò-dé šíjá ñá-k^wini-ši kīšì sānī núú-dè-.
 27. ádéé núú ñà-kúú-kà- dátùnī níkéšìò' sānī núú-dè-.
 28. šidī njīci-dé nùkòò-dé žù[?]ù dè[?]à- níkuū' níkéšìò'
 āⁿāⁿ ndáⁿšíí nīngóò-d^lāⁿ. 29. Ájú ndèè žáⁿđáⁿ níkéšìò'-d^lāⁿ.
 30. Tèè šá[?]à-d^lāⁿ šil-dé náá kídé-ń nùkòò-ń i[?]à kàcī-d^lāⁿ
 šá[?]à-d^lāⁿ. 31. I[?]à nùkòò-í cīì iò ndà[?]ū ndékù-í bē[?]è-í.
 32. Ñà-túú sàà káší ndékū'. 33. Ndékū lāndū-í ndékū'.
 34. Tèè ñá-ni[?]i-í sàà káší-k^wè-šī'. 35. Bá[?]à-ká i[?]à béšì-í
 nù-kòò-í núú t^lá^láⁿ ñà[?]à sānī šil-í ngāu nī[?]nù-í i[?]à kúū-í.
 36. Ñá-áⁿú sàà kúndékū-í cīì iò ndà[?]ū ndékù-í bē[?]è-í
 kàcī-dé šá[?]à-dé šil ndáⁿšíí. 37. Tòndō-ò- náá k^wendā
 ùkà kàdā'-ń núú ndékū' lāndū-ń. 38. Tèè dātā téè

will-fall bottom he gorge that will-die he was. 26. And sit sit he there not want it come sleep eyes his. 27. Until where not be more then came sleep eyes his. 28. Sleep upright he sit he edge gorge that was arrived one buzzard sat animal. 29. Not know where be-within animal arrived animal. 30. And said animal to him what do you sit you here say animal speak animal. 31. Here sit I because very poor be I house my. 32. Not be thing eat be. 33. Be child(ren) my be. 34. And not find I thing eat plural child. 35. Good more here come I sit I so-that will-take-hold person sleep to me will-fall bottom I here will-die I. 36. Not same that will-be I because very poor be house my say he speak he to buzzard. 37. Stupid you what reason thus will-do you if be child(ren) yours. 38. And like man young be you. 39. Not-yet

there; yet sleep would not come to him. 27. After a long time he went to sleep. 28. While he was sleeping upright, seated at the edge of that gorge, a buzzard came and settled down. 29. We don't know where it came from. 30. It said, "What are you doing sitting here?" 31. "Here I am sitting because I am very poor. 32. There's nothing to eat. 33. I have children. 34. But I do not find anything for them to eat. 35. It is better for me to come here and sit so that I will go to sleep and I will fall down here and die. 36. It is better for me not to continue living because I am very poor," he said to the buzzard. 37. "You stupid man. Why are you doing this if you have children? 38. You are yet young. 39. You are not old yet. 40. If you were already old then

kʷèçì kùú'E. 39. Bátá-žáʷáʷ-kàān. 40. Núù ðìkō sà-nísàʷnù-ń šjá- ndúkù-ń kʷèʷé kùū-ń. 41. Tèè žòʷò dàà bītà tèè kʷèçì kùú'-ń. 42. Bītà iō-ká fuersā-ò- kàdà čfú'-E tèè ðùkà kide'-ń. 43. žāçì kʷà-sàā sátà-i-à. 44. Nà-kłʷáʷ-ó nùú kłʷáʷ-i-à kàçì-dłʷ šjáʷ-dłʷ. 45. Kùù kàçì-dé šjáʷ-dé.

46. Tèè níngòò-dłʷ nùú-dè-. 47. Tèè nísáá-dé sátà-dłʷ. 48. Tèè ndáà nžìtā ndłʷ-ñà-dłʷ. 49. Tà sáʷà-dłʷ wèltā tà sáʷà-dłʷ wèltā. 50. Dúkà-nì ðúkà-nì tà-kùū-nínù-dłʷ kʷáʷá. 51. Níkèné-dłʷ ndéé àndłʷù. 52. Tèè šjá nžī žāū. 53. Nížáʷà ndłʷ-ñàʷà-dłʷ. 54. áíkèné-dłʷ ndéé àndłʷù nùú ndékú žáá ndiòšī. 55. Tèè žākā nísáʷ-dłʷ ðùʷà kàā' áʷáʷ téè ná'-niʷi-i ndékà-i-dé béšī. 56. Bītà nùú násà kàdà-ń-ń-dè- çì kʷini-dé kèè-dé déʷbá kùū-dé

old more you. 40. If but already grown-old you for-that-reason look-for you sickness will-die you. 41. And you barely today man young be you. 42. Today be more strength yours do work you and thus do you. 43. Hurry go go-up back my here. 44. Necessary go we where go I here say animal speak animal. 45. Will-be say he speak he.

46. And sat animal before him. 47. And went-up he back animal. 48. And go-up fly with person animal. 49. Continuously give animal turn(s) continuously give animal turn(s). 50. Thus only thus only continuously be above it go. 51. Came-out animal to heaven. 52. And there open hole. 53. Passed with person animal. 54. Came-out animal to heaven where be deity God. 55. And there spoke animal thus be one man again found I bring I him come. 56. Today if how will-do you him because wants he go-into he gorge will-die he was. 57. And

there would be a reason to look for a sickness so as to die. 41. You have just become a young man. 42. You still have strength to work and yet you are acting this way. 43. Hurry, get up on my back. 44. Let's go where I am going," it said. 45. "Alright," he said.

46. The buzzard sat in front of him. 47. He got on its back. 48. The buzzard flew up with him. 49. Around and around it went. 50. It went up and up. It arrived at heaven. 52. There was an opening. 53. It went through it with him. 54. It came out in heaven where God is. 55. There the buzzard said, "This is the kind of man I found and I have brought here. 56. Now what are you going to do with him because he wanted to fall into the gorge and die? 57. When I arrived (where he was) I did not allow him (to do that)

níkùù'. 57. Tèè níkèšìò'-í ñá-nídàñà-ì- nùù nínđàkànì-í-
 dé ndékà-ì-dé bésì kènè kàcì-dlⁿ šáⁿ?à-dlⁿ. 58. Tèè zǎá
 ndìòšì níšáⁿ?à-ká náá k^wèndā òkà kidē'-ń k^winī-ń kùù-E
 tèè ndékū' lāndū-ń. 59. zǎcì k^wàⁿ?á cìù'-í. 60. Káⁿ?áⁿ-ń
 kādā' cìù-E úsá ndùù úsá ndùù tèè úsá nīū. 61. Tèè
 nùù níkù-ndèè inī-ń níkidè cìù'-ń úsá ndùù úsá nīū
 dátùnì òkà tèè nà-dáñá-ń ndèè'-ń ndèè ndékà ñāⁿ?à tèè
 ndékā' ñāⁿ?à bésì kènè kàcì-ká šāⁿ?à-ká.

62. Tèè níšáⁿ?-á-dé nùù náá ndlⁿ-cìù' níkidè-dé.
 63. Níšáⁿ?-á-dé nínàtⁿ?ù-dè-. 64. Náá ndlⁿ-ká-čāū' nítáⁿ?ú
 òtú ndìòšì níkidè-dé. 65. Dátùnì òkà tèè níšáñāⁿ?à-kà-
 lⁿlⁿ njùšì líⁿlì. 66. Káⁿtⁿ-āā kⁿ-dèⁿ?ē-ń-dáⁿ ndèè.
 67. áà-ndèè ndékà ñāⁿ?à tèè ndékā' ñāⁿ?à bésì kènè.
 68. Tèè ndèšìò'-ń tèè káⁿ?áⁿ-ń kⁿ-ndúkú nùù'-ń lⁿlⁿ

arrived I not allowed I so-that raised-up I him bring I him come
 come-out-going-up say animal speak animal. 58. And deity God said
 deity what reason thus do you want you will-die you and be child(ren)
 yours. 59. Hurry go work my here. 60. Go you do work you seven
 day(s) seven day(s) and seven night(s). 61. And if was strong heart
 you did work you seven day(s) seven night(s) then thus and necessary
 will-be-allowed you will-go-out you will-do-down will-bring person man
 bring person come come-out-going-up say deity speak deity.

62. And went he if what with work did he. 63. Went he swept he.
 64. What with more work gave father God did he. 65. Then thus and
 gave deity one chicken little. 66. Animal that will-go hold you animal
 will-go-downward. 67. Necessary will-go-downward will-take person
 man take person come come-out-going-up. 68. And will-arrive you
 and will-go you will-go look-for loan you one clay-pot new if whatever

but I got him up and brought him up here." 58. God said, "Why are you
 acting this way, wanting to die, when you have children? 59. Hurry, go do
 my work. 60. Go work for seven days, seven days and seven nights. 61. If
 you bear up working for seven days and seven nights then you will be allowed
 to leave and go down with the man who brought you here."

62. He went to do all kinds of work. 63. He went to sweep. 64. Whatever
 other work God gave him he did 65. Then God gave him a little chicken.
 66. "Hang onto the chicken on your way down. 67. The one who brought
 you up will take you down. 68. On arriving you will go borrow a new clay
 pot from whoever has one. 69. You will put the chicken inside it. 70. At dawn

káⁿdáⁿ sàà núú ndédà kàāčžù nèbá[?]à. 69. Tèè šāⁿtāⁿ káⁿdāⁿ-à- čì[?]ì-ń-dāⁿ. 70. Tèè túú ndāā ndùù tēē tēè nà-kāā-ń kùndè[?]è[?]è-ń núú náá ndāⁿ-ñù[?]ū'. 71. Tèè šíá tábā-ń. 72. K^wàā-ń klⁿtāⁿ kàndèkà-ń. 73. K^wàā-ń ndāⁿkūtù-ń. 74. K^wàā-ń k^wāžū-ń. 75. K^wàā-ń mbēē-ń. 76. K^wàā-ń n^jūšì[?]-ń. 77. K^wàā-ń k^wé-īnā-ń. 78. K^wàā-ń núní kàšì-ń k^wàā-ń. 79. èátùnī ngwítà-ń ndùkū' ndèè-ń kādà čīū-ń čīl kūù tēè-ń kàčì dútú ndìòšì šá[?]à-ká. 80. áíkáⁿ?ú n^jūšì-à- čìlè[?]é-dè- šìò kù[?]ā-dé. 81. Tèè λⁿλⁿ šìò ndā[?]à-dé nínūmī-dé sátá ndāⁿšíí-à-. 82. Tèè níndèè ndāⁿ-ñā-dāⁿ. 83. Tà-sá[?]à-dāⁿ tà-sá[?]à-dāⁿ wēltā k^wá-ndèè-dāⁿ. 84. áínàtāšì nùkòò ñā[?]à-dāⁿ žù[?]ū dè[?]bá núú nìsá-ngè[?]è ñā[?]à-dāⁿ. 85. Nà-kè[?]è-ń ičì' nú[?]-ń kàčì-dāⁿ šá[?]à-dāⁿ šīl-dé.

be people have. 69. And inside clay-pot that will-put-in you animal. 70. And will-appear dawn day tomorrow and again will-open you will-look you if what with-contain. 71. And that will-take-out you. 72. Will-buy you animal(s) have you. 73. Will-buy you ox(en) your. 74. Will buy you horse(s) your. 75. Will-buy you sheep your. 76. Will-buy you chick(ens) your. 77. Will-buy you plural dog your. 78. Will-buy you corn will-eat you will-buy you. 79. Then will-begin you will-look hard you will-do work you because will-be man you say father God speak deity. 80. Entered chicken that armpit his side left his. 81. And one side hand his embraced he back buzzard that. 82. And went-down with person animal. 83. Continuously go-around animal continuously go-around animal circle(s) go go-down animal. 84. Again gave sit person animal edge gorge where went get person animal. 85. Again will-take you road will-go-home you say animal speak animal to him.

tomorrow you will open the pot and look into it to see what it contains. 71. Take out whatever is in it. 72. Buy animals for yourself. 73. Buy oxen. 74. Buy horses. 75. Buy sheep. 76. Buy chickens. 77. Buy dogs. 78. Buy corn to eat. 79. Then begin to put forth the effort to work because you are a man," said God. 80. He put the chicken under his left arm. 81. With one hand he held onto the buzzard. 82. And the buzzard went down with him. 83. Going around and around it went down. 84. The buzzard put him down at the edge of the gorge where it had gone to get him. 85. "Take the trail and go home," the buzzard said to him.

86. Nínà-kē'è-dé ìcì k'á-nū'ū-dé bē'è-dé. 87. Níndè-
 šìò'-dé bē'è-dé. 88. Lù'pà lù'pà ndàà lāndū-dé níkèè-dé.
 89. K'wá'á-dé tēè sáta nī'ndèšìò'-dé sàníndlⁿlⁿ-k'wè-šì
 sà-nà'nū' cīì sá-úsá ndùù nísáá-dé tēè úsá k'wíá níkèè-dé
 núú-k'wè-šì nísá'á-dé. 90. Tēè sáta nīndèšìò'-dé tēè nā-
 nákinī nā'á-kāa-k'wè-šì. 91. Tēè ndéé nísá'á-n nācī-k'wè-šì
 šá'á-k'wè-šì. 92. Tēè nísá'á-dé núú nī'sá'á-de. 93. Báa
 ndèé níší'í-n kà'ā'-ndāⁿ núú níšē'ndē inī nā'á-ndāⁿ-níkūú
 káčī-k'wè-šì šá'á-k'wè-šì. 94. Nā'á cīì dù'pà kāa núú
 nísá'á-í káčī-dé šá'á-dé. 95. Níndátú'ū-dé ndlⁿlⁿ-k'wè-šì
 ndlⁿlⁿ náná-k'wè-šì. 96. èátunī nísá'á-dé nísá-ndúkú-dé-
 ká'dlⁿ. 97. Nídá-kéè-dé njūšì-à-šāⁿtāⁿ ká'dlⁿ-à-. 98. Tēè
 níkwāà.

99. šáta nítúú ndāā lⁿngā nùù tēè nínakáá-dé ká'dlⁿ.

86. Again took he road go go-home he house his. 87. Arrived he
 house his. 88. Little little be child(ren) his went-out he. 89. Go he
 and after arrived he already finished plural child thing big because
 thing seven day(s) went-up he and seven year(s) went-out he before
 plural child went he. 90. And after arrived he and not again know
 person more plural child. 91. And where went you say plural child
 speak plural child. 92. And spoke he where went he. 93. Well to died
 you say we so cut heart person we was say plural child speak plural
 child. 94. No because thus thus be place went I say he speak he.
 95. Spoke he with plural child and with mother plural child. 96. Then
 went he went look-for he clay-pot. 97. Made go-in he chicken that
 inside clay-pot that. 98. And was-late.

99. After appeared dawn another day and opened he clay-pot.

86. He took the trail and went home. 87. He arrived home. 88. His
 children were very little when he went away. 89. But after he returned all
 the children big because the seven days he went (to heaven) from his children
 were seven years. 90. After he arrived the children did not recognize him.
 91. "Where have you been?" the children said. 92. He told them where he
 had been. 93. "Why, we were saying you were dead so we gave up hope for
 you," they said. 94. "No, that's the kind of place I went to," he said. 95. He
 spoke with the children and with their mother. 96. Then he went to look for a
 clay pot. 97. He put the chicken into it. 98. Night fell.

99. At dawn the next day he opened the pot. 100. It was full to the

100. Ndùù ndáá-nì-ká plàtā nùú k̄áⁿd̄l̄áⁿ. 101. Nítābà-dé dīⁿú-à-. 102. Níkù-dáⁿáⁿ inì-dé nítābà-dé. 103. Nísāā-žù núní nísāā-žù. 104. Níngwità-dé sáá-dè- ndáⁿkútú. 105. Nísāā-dé kⁿāžū. 106. Nísāā-dé k̄áⁿt̄l̄áⁿ ndèè. 107. Nísāā-dé njūšì. 109. Nísāā-dé kòlò òrē dáⁿà níkùù kⁿíkà-dè-. 110. Níkìdè tèè ñàⁿà dùtú ndiòšì. 111. Dìkò ndáⁿšífì nínđákàni ñàⁿà-dl̄áⁿ njìdōⁿ ñàⁿà-dl̄áⁿ nísáá ndéé àndl̄áⁿù. 112. Úsá ndùù níkìdè-dé kⁿèndā nísáá-dé. 113. Tèè sáá ùsá ndùù nínđèšìòⁿ-dé ñūū-dé šáⁿā-žù sáá ùsá kⁿíá níkùù níkèè-dé. 114. Kàcì ndíì šíì-í níkàni-ndíì kⁿèndū. 115. Dùkà kàāⁿ hìstōriā níkàni- kⁿè-dé nùú ndíì níkàcì-ndíì níkàni-ndíì kⁿèndū.

100. Be level only more silver face clay-pot. 101. Took-out he money that. 102. Was pleasure heart he took-out he. 103. Bought people corn bought people. 104. Began he buy he ox(en). 105. Bought he horse(s). 106. Bought he animal(s) strong. 107. Bought he sheep. 108. Bought he chicken(s). 109. Bought he turkey(s) when thus became rich he. 110. Made man person father God. 111. But buzzard called person animal carried person animal went-up to sky. 112. Seven day(s) made he account went-up he. 113. And thing seven day(s) arrived he town his say people thing seven year(s) was went-out he. 114. Say dead grandfather my told dead-one story. 115. Thus be story told plural he before dead-one told dead-one told dead-one story.

brim with silver. 101. He took out the money. 102. He took pleasure in taking out the money. 103. They bought corn. 104. He began to buy oxen. 105. He bought horses. 106. He bought mules. 107. He bought sheep. 108. He bought chickens. 109. He bought turkeys when he became rich in this way. 110. God made a man of him. 111. But it was the buzzard that called him and carried him up into heaven. 112. He figured that he went up (to heaven) for seven days. 113. The seven days until he returned they told him were seven years. 114. This is the story that my late grandfather told. 115. This is the story that was told to him and that he told.